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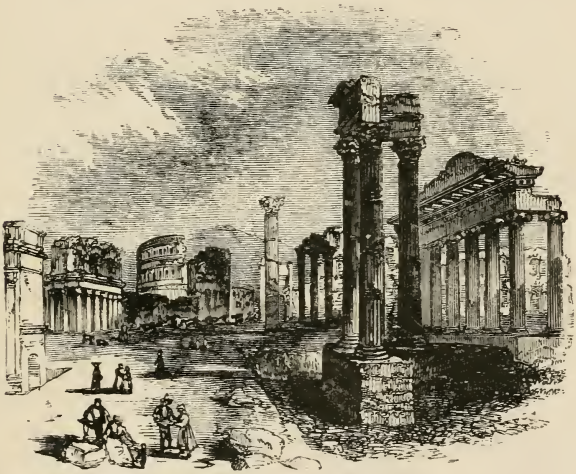

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# PREFACE.

The present volume is an attempt to convey, in a form which may not be unacceptable to the general reader, the important facts of early ecclesiastical history, together with such illustrations as modern literature may supply. The author offers it as a humble, and, he fears, imperfect effort to communicate valuable knowledge, and to deepen the foundations of Christian faith and practice. It is his unhesitating belief, that, as Christianity is a system of divine origin, it can only be truly understood by approaching its source. But the history of Christ's church, so far as it has not been recorded by inspired pens, is open to all the aids which learning and criticism can furnish, and which on this subject

have not been applied in vain. The author rejoices to believe that the forms in which personal religion was exhibited by the Albigenses, the Reformers, the Puritans, and the Nonconformists, were substantially identical; and that their leading doctrines were coincident with those of the early Christians in their best periods. Nevertheless, instead of holding that modern ecclesiastical writings have merely tended to obscure important truths, it is his conviction that German errors have received no more fatal blow than from some of the criticism of existing times; especially from that which is furnished by the acquisition of the long-lost work of Hippolytus; that resuscitation having dashed to the ground the cherished hypothesis of Strauss and his followers, — that the Gospel of John was written in the second century, and was, therefore, a conjectural and imaginative rather than a real history.

To maintain neutrality between conflicting senti ments on important points has been no part of the

writer's object. But the present work is not intended to be polemical. If on some minor questions the author has not been careful to utter a formal "deliverance," he hopes it will neither be regarded as arising from indifference to truth or from a morbid dread of controversy, but rather from a conviction that many questions otherwise important appear small when we stand within view of the "common salvation." Entertaining a deep conviction that Romanism is a traitorous exponent of the principles and doctrines of the Cross of Christ, and that Tractarianism holds to Popery the precise relation which the third century did to the sixth,— that is, that the former is the bud of which the latter is the blossom,— the author has not hesitated to avail himself of all the illustrations of this topic which lay in his way, and which, indeed, the pages of ecclesiastical history furnish in superabundance.

He begs to express his thanks to his Excellency the Chevalier Bunsen, who permitted him, with graceful courtesy, to transfer the engraving which

appears in page 258, and whose valuable work on "Hippolytus and his Times" entitles him to the thanks of the Christian public, though they may occasionally dissent from his opinions.

In conclusion, the author commends his volume to the indulgence of his readers and to the blessing of God.

Bradford, *April* 18*th*, 1853.

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JERUSALEM—GENERAL VIEW.

# INTRODUCTION.

## JERUSALEM AND THE PENTECOST.

The artist's pencil has often sketched, and the author's pen more frequently described, the city of Jerusalem, so wonderfully associated with memories of the past and hopes of the future. Long before its walls had actually arisen, the foretold glories of that metropolis directed the faith of wandering patriarchs, assuring them of a home, into which, though they might not live to witness it, their posterity should be ultimately gathered. In subsequent times, the achievements of empire, the inspirations of genius, the instructions of a religion supernaturally made known, and the visible emblems of a manifested

Deity, shone around a spot hereafter to be rendered memorable by a world-wide history. Previously to the advent of Christ the name of Jerusalem had become interlaced with the movements of all the greater empires. Babylon had desolated it; Persia had restored it; Alexander the Great had received its submission and done homage to the sanctity of its religion; Egypt, its early enemy, had become its ruler; Antiochus had robbed it, insulted it, and deluged its streets with blood; Pompey had thrown down its walls; Crassus had removed the treasures which his predecessor had respected; and it had at length fallen, a tributary to the Roman empire, into the hands of Herod, who filled it with the blood of his subjects and of his own family. After his death, the Jews became still more abjectly the slaves of the Roman government, till at length Tiberius, then emperor, appointed Pontius Pilate the governor of Judea; — Antipas, at the same time, holding the tributary kingship of Galilee and Peræa, under the will of his father Herod.

The geographical situation of Jerusalem corresponds with its singular history. At the time of which we write, it was still the centre of the known world, though Rome was rapidly extending its dominions on the European side. The position accorded with the historical character of a metropolis the religion of which had been so long the former and civilizer of nations. Its situation was adapted to its eminence; surrounded on three sides by deep natural fosses, as if nature had dug them out from the surrounding eminences, and thrown the débris up into the hills which formed an exterior bulwark, the city presented in times of early warfare a picture of security, and an emblem of the protection promised by God to his faithful followers. "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about his people." Natural outlines are the truest memorials of antiquity; and Jerusalem preserved these amidst the terrible desolations of its varied history. But the traveller, whose enthusiastic expectations have been excited

alike by the representations of poetry and prophecy, usually looks upon Jerusalem with disappointment; and the eye which ranges over the flat roofs of the modern metropolis, or extends its gaze to the stony and arid heights around, where a few dull olive-trees scarcely relieve the scene, remembers with a sigh the "glorious things" which were once spoken of this "city of God." Yet Jerusalem affords a proof, stronger even than the walls of Nineveh, or the calcined bricks of Babylon, of the indelible truth of scriptural prophecy, and of the manner in which that prophecy is usually fulfilled; not always by direct interventions of divine power, but by permitting the sins of men, unchecked by the energies of the Spirit, to work out their natural consequences.

At the period when the life of the Lord Jesus was drawing to its close, Jerusalem was a much more considerable city than it now is. Its walls both on the north and south embraced considerable areas now excluded from their protection. These walls were triple except when impassable valleys rendered this repeated protection unnecessary. Within their enclosure rose two conspicuous eminences, the one characterized by the palace recently erected by Herod the Great, the other by the Temple, refitted and almost rebuilt by the same monarch. The palace was connected with three marble towers, one bearing the name of Hippicus, Herod's brother; another that of Phasaelus, his friend; and a third that of Mariamne. his beloved but cruelly-murdered wife. Josephus minutely describes the magnificence of this royal edifice, and represents it as surrounded by groves and artificial canals; not, perhaps, rivalling Versailles, but remarkable for the time at which they were laid out. On the other hill, the stately Temple, so often referred to in sacred history, occupied a site levelled by Solomon at an enormous expense. It was constructed of huge stones, artificially prepared; its spacious cloisters were floored with the richest ornamental marbles; and the sanctuary, which stood in the midst of the pile of buildings, was so covered over with gold, as that in the

light of the rising sun it flashed with a fiery splendor. Within were treasures of incalculable value; for though it had been often despoiled, the religion or the superstition of its worshippers was continually heaping new offerings upon its shrine. Nothing which the Temple at this time contained — for the days of its greatest eminence had passed forever — was more remarkable than the celebrated golden vine, with branches (if Josephus do not exaggerate their size) as large as a man. This vine was said continually to grow larger from the presents made to it; one worshipper giving a branch, another a leaf, another a bunch of grapes, all of the same metal. Closely adjoining to the Temple was another work of Herod's, the tower of Antonia, named after Mark Antony. This was the citadel of the Temple; it was surrounded by four smaller towers, and it possessed all the apparatus of a sumptuous palace. Besides these erections, these two hills were connected by a lofty bridge built across the intervening valley. The circuit of the city was, according to Josephus, about four miles. It is useless to conjecture, from the careless and exaggerated accounts of the Jewish historian, who wrote his statistics from memory, what might be, at that time, the number of its inhabitants.

Turning from the city itself, a passing glance may be taken at the character of its inhabitants. The changes to which Judea had been so long subject would have obliterated the national features of any other people under heaven. But the Jewish character was like the Greek fire, unquenchable; and though at this time it exhibited few specimens of that noble and distinguished excellence which marked many periods of its past history, its general complexion was not very different from what, a few exceptions apart, it had always been. Shrewd, selfish and impulsive, forward to teach, and obstinately slow to learn; arrogating God's favor to himself as his moral birth-right; proud of his ancestry, because it flattered his own egotism; religious, because religion gave him superiority over others; ignorant of the true meaning of almost all of which he boasted; super-

cilious, impatient, severe; alternately submissive to political thraldom, and rashly defying all consequences in the effort to shake it off, — the Jew of the Christian era reproduced the character which had marked the nation in the times of the Judges, of Moses, of Rehoboam, and of the later monarchs. Nor was it wonderful that they who believed themselves to have received "the prophetical office for all mankind"* should have always expected a special intervention for their rescue, whatever the calamities which might befall them, or whatever the sins which might have provoked the divine displeasure. They had accordingly neither eyes to see nor ears to hear the signals of their coming ruin. Prophets had remonstrated. The Baptist had denounced. Jesus, authenticated as the Messiah by prophecy, miracles and morals, had taught the purification of the heart which alone could have enabled them to see God. In vain! The Jew admired the miracle only because it fed his political hopes. But his inmost heart shrunk from the truth which the miracle attested, and they who had at first hung upon the words of Jesus with eagerness saw him perish at last without an effort for his rescue.

As the immediate intercourse between God and the Jews had ceased, the Jewish church became divided into sects. The leading bodies were the Pharisees and Sadducees. These bodies severally represented the classes of opinion to which the corrupted church is ever prone, its superstition and its rationalism; both extremes equidistant from a humble and purified heart. The one sought righteousness in the naked moralities of an external religion, the other in the husks of a piety from which the kernel was gone; neither in a heart brought near to God by penitence and reflection of His moral image. Of these sects, the Pharisees were the most learned, numerous, and popular. Their name, "the separated," distinguished them from "the people of the earth," as all others were contemptuously desig-

* Philo.

nated. They were the instructors of the people. They held the doctrine of predestination without denying man's liberty. They regarded the dogmas transmitted to them from their fathers with the utmost reverence; and taught that only through those ancient traditions could the law be comprehended aright, though those traditions* compromised its dignity and neutralized its moralities. Yet amidst their errors some truth remained. They believed in the resurrection of the body, in the future rewards of the righteous, and in the everlasting misery of the impenitent.† Some have imagined that the Pharisaic opinion on the resurrection was an approach to the Pythagorean doctrine of metempsychosis. But this allegation does not appear to be supported by sufficient evidence. Origen expressly declares that they held the true doctrine.‡ Josephus speaks also of the purity of their lives. But it must be remembered that in speaking of the Pharisees he was speaking of the sect to which he himself belonged; and, without adverting to the disputed text in the eighth chapter of John, the general tone of the Scripture narrative warrants a very different conclusion. There were probably among the Pharisees men who, like Saul, were conscientious though mistaken; and many more who gratified pride, covetousness, and the fiercer passions, by means of the superiority accorded to them by the veneration of the people. From this body the modern Jews have descended.

The Sadducees professed to adhere to the venerable Judaism of their fathers, free from all post-Babylonish glosses. Asserting the superiority of the five books of Moses, they treated with comparative disregard the other sacred writings. They maintained the freedom of the will, and boldly denied the doc-

* These absurdities were afterwards collected, and now constitute the Talmuds. The Jerusalem Talmud dating from A. D. 300; the Babylonish Talmud, from the sixth century. The term "Talmud" comprehends the Mishna, the text; and the Gemara, the commentary.

† Joseph. Antiq. lib. xviii. c. 1. Hippolyti Hæres: § 28.

‡ Origen on Matt. 14: 1, 2.

trine of predestination. They rejected also the belief of the soul's immortality, declaring that angels (whom the Pharisees almost worshipped) were to be regarded as a mere figure* (the Straussian doctrine would use the Greek word "myth"), and not as corresponding with any existing realities. Accordingly, they measured God's favor to individuals with the amount of temporal advantages they might happen to possess. But they had little bond of union among themselves, and could scarcely be said to constitute a distinct body; whilst the habits of sneering sarcasm in which, according to the wont of sceptics, they were accustomed to indulge, rendered them notorious for the harsh judgments they formed of those who differed from their own dogmas. So negative a creed as Sadduceeism could not produce much effect on the popular mind, and the system was, accordingly, mainly confined to men of wealth addicted to human pleasures.

Though these two sects were the leading ones into which the Jews were divided, it is right that we should make mention of another, which, though little regarded at the time of our Lord, had, in the subsequent periods of the church, no small influence over the temper of early Christianity. These were the Essæans, or Essenes, more rigorous in their discipline than even the Pharisees themselves, and holding doctrines in part resembling the Platonists, and in part approximating to the mysticism of the Orientals. They dwelt in communities distant from human habitations, principally on the western shore of the Dead Sea; most of them abjured marriage; they united, like the monks of a later age, labor with devotion; they permitted no slavery; held a communism of goods; refused oaths; avoided all contact with the uncircumcised, and would partake of no food unless prepared by members of their own sect. Against the Pharisees, they maintained the doctrine of an absolute decree; against the Sadducees, they asserted that of a future state.

* προπολογομενον. See Origen on Matt. 14 : 1, 2.

Their great virtues won for them general respect, though they had no social sympathies. A sect not altogether unlike them, commemorated by Philo under the name of Therapeutæ, are related to have lived at a later period near Alexandria, beyond the Lake Maria (Maræotis), of whom the following account is given: "But laying down temperance first as a kind of foundation in their minds, upon this they build the other virtues. For none of them is to bring food or drink before the setting of the sun, since they judge that philosophical exercises should be prosecuted in the light, but the necessities of the body in the dark; whence they assign the one to the day and the other to a small portion of the night. But some of them do not remember their food for three days when influenced by an uncommon desire of knowledge. . . . While one sings gracefully with a certain measure, the others, listening in silence, join in singing the final clauses of the hymns; also on the above-mentioned days [the vigils of the great festivals] they lie on straw spread on the ground, and abstain altogether from wine, and taste no flesh." *

It was in this city of Jerusalem, as it existed twenty-nine years after the birth of Christ, that the history of the Christian church began. The Pentecost, one of the three great annual festivals of the Jewish nation, had summoned the male adults, Jews and proselytes, to the sacred metropolis. The picture presented by Jerusalem at such a season must have been altogether unique. The flat-roofed buildings of the modern city probably present a sufficiently accurate notion of the general style of erection then common; and the encircling hills are, save in the present absence of relieving vegetation, what they have ever been. But the spoiler's hand had not then swept from Jerusalem all its magnificent public buildings, and the Jew was not then, as now, an alien and an outcast in his own city. In that metropolis might then be seen the Pharisee, his mortar-

* Eusebius, c. xviii. (Bagster.)

shaped hat pressed deeply on his brow, so as to confine his view to the ground at his feet; his phylacteries bound on his left arm or on his forehead, his fringes conspicuous on his garments, his sharp spikes dangling at his side, scarcely lifting his feet from his path, as, apparently absorbed in meditation, he passed slowly along; watching with jealous care lest he should receive defilement from some accidental source; or performing his devotions in a public spot, as tenaciously as a modern Mahometan, but with infinitely more of spiritual vain-glory. Occasionally the aversion which agitated the mass around would indicate the presence of some collector of the imperial tribute (usually a Roman, though the inferior posts were not seldom held by Jews), whose very presence was suggestive of hateful national subjection. The hum of many differing languages in the crowded streets would correspond with the various nations of those who came "to worship at the feast," and indicate the Hellenist, the Greek, the Persian, the Mesopotamian, the Asian, the Egyptian, the Roman, the Cretan, the Arabian, or even the Ethiopian. Camels bearing on their backs the piled luggage of newly-arrived travellers, or the horses of the desert less heavily but more gracefully caparisoned, would dispute the passage or block up the crowded avenues; the lowing of beasts brought together for sacrifice would in many quarters be loudly heard; the merchants of various kinds who found employment in the Temple service would be hurrying about in quest of gain. The polished arms of the Roman soldier, or the emblematic device which formed his standard, the graceful robe of the imperial citizen, or the homely pallium of the philosopher, would occasionally diversify the scene. The Temple itself, its porticoes and cloisters crowded with visitors, for whom a large and sacred hospitality was everywhere demanded, would present continually to the eye the white turban and the embroidered and girdled vests of the priests officiating in the order of their course, attended by the Nethinim, who carried the implements required in the public service. Such was the picture often presented by Jeru-

salem at the Pentecost; a period when the unusual concourse of Jews in that city prompted them on more than one occasion to attempt the removal of their hated yoke; an endeavor which usually ended in deluges of blood.

Seven weeks before this time, a somewhat similar festival, the feast of the Passover, had witnessed the death of Jesus of Nazareth. That subject was too recent and too important not greatly to occupy the Jews at this Pentecost. The student of our Lord's life and death is already familiar with the facts of that remarkable period. It is unnecessary that we should here narrate them. Full of faith and joy, arising from confidence in their divine religion, so remarkably confirmed by the facts of the resurrection, the disciples of Jesus had remained together during the ten days which elapsed between the ascension and the day of Pentecost, sometimes occupying an upper room, in which their Christian business was conducted, and in which probably Matthias was chosen (temporarily, as it proved, till the conversion of Paul) in the place of Judas, and sometimes in the Temple, where their devotions, both personal and social, were usually performed.

The Pentecost had come. As if the disciples had a presentiment that this might be the day on which the promised Spirit should be given, they all, under an instinctive impulse, kept together in one place.* As the Passover commemorated the presentation of the first fruits of harvest (according to the beautiful formula contained in Deut. xxvi.) and as it was also a memorial of the giving of the law from the Mount, it was natural that at this season they should expect the promise of the Paraclete to be realized; itself the pledge of a gospel gathering, and the communication of a higher law to the church. They had probably united already in the Temple devotions of the first hour of prayer, and had afterwards gone into one of

* ὁμοθυμαδόν, Acts 2 : 1.

the many chambers in its vicinity.* They were praying. As they prayed, a profound feeling of solemnity and devotion filled every mind; each one among them felt that he stood not far from the kingdom of God. Suddenly, a peculiar supernatural sound, swelling into a blast, resembling a rushing powerful wind, like to that which in the beginning moved upon the face of the waters, filled the place, and recalled to their minds the significant action by which Jesus had prepared them for this visitation, when, breathing on them, he said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost!" At the same time, a lambent flame, presenting the appearance of many tongues united, hovered over the head of each disciple, perhaps in allusion to the tradition of the Jews, that their Rabbis were surrounded by fire as they delivered their doctrines to the people; or, with a reference to the heathen notion, that a flame above the head was the emblem of divine influence. The disciples were at the same time conscious of a distinct but inexplicable operation, which deepened their devotion, strengthened their confidence, increased their zeal, and filled them with unutterable love for their risen Master and his cause. When the first awful feeling of astonishment had subsided, and the disciples attempted to express their emotions to each other, they found, to their own astonishment, that they were uttering their sentiments in language till then perfectly unfamiliar. They spoke with other tongues. The great promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost was fulfilled. The Spirit was upon them now!

The excitement caused by the apostles' consciousness of the new miracle infected those around, and a large crowd of Jews and proselytes soon gathered about the spot. To the astonishment of every by-stander, to whom the previous ignorance of

* A private house may have possibly been the scene. But in that case it is difficult to account for the rapid transmission of the news of the subsequent miracle, unless, as some do, we suppose an earthquake to have awakened general attention. Of that, however, nothing is said. It is evident that a large concourse could not have been far distant.

these noted Galileans must have been perfectly familiar, many heard the apostles speak their own native languages with perfect ease. To them the phenomenon was most extraordinary. But others, who had not recognized their own tongue, and who were astonished at the Babel of differing sounds, pronounced the babbling to be merely the effect of intoxication. At this crisis Peter stood up in the midst of the large and excited multitude, led by a divine impulse, to give explanation of the fact, and to announce the advent of the new gospel kingdom. Beseeching his hearers not to impute drunkenness to the disciples, especially at that unusual hour, he proceeded to explain that the wonder they had witnessed was the gift of the Holy Spirit already promised by the prophet Joel, and that the day of the salvation of the world was come. He briefly recited the main features of the life of Jesus, and the fact of his crucifixion by the Jews at the last feast, and then announced, to their astonishment, that this Jesus, whose religion was erroneously supposed to have been erased by his bloody death, was indeed risen from the dead, and that every disciple there assembled was prepared, by many differing but distinct proofs, to bear witness to the fact. The effect was sudden — electric. The announcement, tallying with so many coincidences of moral and actual probability, was deepened by the earnest and unfaltering tones of confidence and truth in which the speaker addressed them, and being applied to the judgment and conscience by the agency of the Holy Ghost, was resistless. The hearers believed the fact of the resurrection, inferred hence the dignity of Jesus as the Messiah, and, by a rapid process of thought and conviction, saw their own guilt in refusing his claims and outraging his person, and the prevalent cry was, "What must we do?" — How shall we escape the consequences of sins of such atrocity?

In reply, Peter preached to them the gospel of his new mission; exhorted them to repent of their sins, and to receive by faith the atonement of the glorified Jesus, submitting to baptism in his name; assuring them that thus their transgression would

be forgiven, and the Holy Spirit would descend on them, on their posterity, and on the heathen world at large. The crisis was one in which, as in all times of great reformation, effects are produced suddenly — almost instantaneously. Before so vehement an onslaught of truth applied to the mind by the Spirit of God, prejudices and habits of sin at once gave way; the mind was unguarded; the spiritual siege was won. By addresses, repeated thus at intervals, and seconded, as they probably were, by appeals from the other disciples, the hearers believed; and the close of that day witnessed the astonishing result of three thousand new converts baptized and pledged to the party of the crucified Nazarene.

Such were the occurrences which led to the first formation of the Christian church, consisting as it now did (including the disciples of our Lord's personal ministry) of about three thousand five hundred persons. The religion recognized by these members of the new society was at once simple and comprehensive. That men's ignorance of God and rejection of his claims placed them in a position of guilt and ruin; that the renewal of the heart was therefore indispensable to the possession of his kingdom; that Jesus, the true Messiah, had voluntarily died to effect an atonement; that faith in him was the acceptance of that atonement, and the beginning of a new life, to be developed by the influence of his regenerating Spirit; these were the prominent doctrines exhibited, there can be no doubt, on that day of the Pentecost, and these the substantial elements of the future Christianity. Regarding themselves still as Jews, to whom had been revealed the true spirit of the system already taught by Moses and the prophets, the earliest believers did not separate themselves from the forms of the Temple service. Yet they constituted an interior community, in which no member lost his individuality, whilst all hung upon the apostles as their spiritual leaders, and awaited with earnestness the teachings of the Spirit through their lips. They cultivated the frankest friendship with each other; unbosoming each to each the secret

processes of their inward and spiritual life; they mingled together perpetually in social intercourse, eating together, acting together, praying together, and thus they constituted a brotherhood not so much swayed by exterior and specific laws as by a life-giving and sympathetic holiness. The uprightness and charity of their lives won for them the respect of all observers, prepossessing their minds in favor of the new religion. As the circumstances under which the church was formed kept strangers in the city, and as those who united themselves to the Christian society sacrificed, by their profession of so hateful a faith, their name, their connections, and their worldly prospects, a liberal hospitality was peculiarly needed. The early church was accordingly distinguished by a large generosity, which was in fact only the imperfect reflection of the love of that Master who had given himself for them. It is not necessary that we should suppose any law to exist requiring community of goods. Peter's remonstrance with Ananias and Sapphira proves the contrary. This is corroborated also by the emphatic relation of the donation of Barnabas, and the mention, in Acts 12 : 12, of a house belonging to "Mary the mother of Mark." But in the code of Christian morality the generous is always identical with the true, and self sacrifice and beneficence were the most distinguished features of their Master. The wealthy voluntarily shared their possessions with the poor, and the amount of need was the measure of benevolence. Such is Christianity as represented by the author of the Epistle to Diognetus, the writer being in all probability one of the apostolical age:

"For Christians are neither in country, nor language, nor manners, distinguished from other men. For they neither inhabit cities of their own, nor use any peculiar dialect, nor lead a distinctive life. Nor was their discipline devised for them by any inventiveness or forethought of intermeddling men, nor are they guided, like some others, by human dogmas. But, being inhabitants of cities, whether Greek or barbarian, as the lot of each may be, and following the customs of the inhabitants, both

in dress and food and modes of life, they exhibit a strange and confessedly singular bearing in their polity. For they inhabit their own father-lands, yet as strangers in them. They have all things in common as citizens, yet they suffer all things as strangers. Every foreign land is their country, and every country a foreign land. They marry, like all others; they beget children; but they do not destroy them when begotten. They have a common table, but not a common (bed). They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They live upon earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. They obey the laws, and by their lives exceed all laws. They love all and are followed by all. They are not understood, and yet are condemned. They are killed, and yet made alive; they are poor, yet make many rich; they are in need of all things, yet they abound in all things."* The risen Saviour had breathed into his disciples the quickening powers of a divine life, and converted persons, flocking to them day by day, continually increased the numbers of their community.

Since the time at which our Lord first commissioned his disciples to preach his coming kingdom, his messengers had been invested with miraculous powers. But, as this spiritual energy had always been in proportion to the faith of the performer, it is not wonderful that the early attempts of the disciples, when as yet their faith was weak, had been frequently imperfect, and sometimes utter failures. By the gift of the Spirit, however, they became thoroughly accomplished in all the thaumaturgy which their new position demanded. Gifts of healing, of preaching, of speaking foreign languages, of insight into gospel mys-

* Ad Diognetum Epistola. This elegant letter is found in most editions of Justin (Martyr). It is, however, among the works attributed to him on insufficient authority. In the same class are the "Oration to the Grecks," the "Exhortation" to the same people, and the treatise on "Monarchy." Hefele places the fragment among the writings of the apostolical fathers. It has been conjectured, however, that the last part, section 10, does not belong rightfully to the other portions of the epistle.

teries, of government of the church, of revelation of truth hitherto unknown, were distributed amongst the disciples in differing measures and varying combinations; qualifying them thus to proclaim, defend, and cherish the truth, and also to afford mutual comfort and sustenance to each other. Nor were these powers confined to our Lord's original disciples, for at the time of the descent of the Spirit special gifts descended also upon the new converts, making them, though each in his own measure, equal in privilege with the mass of those to whom they had become united. Still a special distinction was conferred on the twelve, and, after the first constitution of the church, the charismata were conveyed by the apostles to the believing brethren. Adopting the formula of consecrating to particular offices by the laying on of hands, which marked the designation of ancient kings and priests, the converts were installed thus "kings and priests to God," and simultaneously with this act the Holy Spirit's special gifts were conveyed.

The church thus formed manifested its divine origin by a miracle performed on its behalf, in the name of Jesus, at the "Beautiful gate" of the Temple, where a man born lame was restored to perfect strength by the agency of Peter and John. On this occasion Peter addressed the assembled and wondering people in language not very dissimilar from that he had hitherto employed with the greatest effect. About fifteen hundred converts appear to have been united to the church in consequence of this miracle and address.

Up to this time the Jewish rulers had, since the crucifixion of Christ, maintained a strict and guarded silence. Conscious of the weakness of their statement that the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus, and that it was an argument which could not fail to rebound on themselves, since they had neither instituted an examination into this alleged occurrence, nor taken measures for punishing such reprehensible negligence as that of soldiers sleeping at their post, they were obviously unwilling to submit the question to public scrutiny, and they probably hoped that

time and patience would subdue the effervescence of this new religion. But, when they witnessed the excitement which followed this miracle,* they were thrown off their guard, and, enraged at what had taken place, they determined to crush this popular enthusiasm. Accordingly, they apprehended the apostles, and brought them next morning before the Sanhedrim.

This body, the supreme council of the Jews, to whom was specially intrusted the care of the Jewish religion, was composed of the most distinguished among the priests (including usually the High Priest), the most eminent men for wisdom among the people (called in scripture Elders), and the doctors of the law (or Scribes), and of this council the High Priest was ordinarily president. They sat usually in one of the chambers of the Temple, though in cases of emergency they occupied the house of the High Priest; and could pronounce sentences, though the Roman government alone could execute the severer ones. It was by this council our Lord had been tried in the morning of the day on which he died; and the same assembly which had delivered him over into the hands of Pilate as an adjudged blasphemer was now assembled, probably on the first great occasion since that sentence, to pronounce on the guilt of those who preached religion in his name.

Brought thus before the semi-circular tribunal of the Sanhedrim, and placed in the midst of what every Jew would regard as a formidable array of wisdom, authority and power, these two fishermen of Galilee, Peter and John, were interrogated respecting the recent miracle. The design of their judges was to entrap them into the confession that they had employed some

* The Jewish representations of these transactions are sufficiently unscrupulous. Jesus is accused in the Talmud of persuading men to idolatry clandestinely; he is declared to have suffered death at Leid, and not at Jerusalem; it is declared that witnesses in his favor were invited, but that none appeared, and, moreover, that he was executed first by stoning, then by hanging — the usual death of blasphemers. See Lardner's works, vol. III. p. 557. Ed. 1815.

name which might fix on them the charge of using magical incantations, — an accusation heretofore levelled against their Master himself; or, failing in that, to intimidate them from the prosecution of their errand. To their surprise and consternation, when the question was asked, "By what name or by what power have ye done this?" Peter replied, with an undaunted bravery, which was the first-fruit of the Spirit of God; asserting the resurrection from the dead of Him whom this council had crucified, and declaring His to be the potent name, and His the all-subduing authority, by which the miracle had been performed; not failing to assert, at the same time, the doctrine of salvation through, and only through, His name.

The boldness of Peter and John astonished the Sanhedrim, who, looking more narrowly at them, recognized them as having been disciples of Jesus. They quailed internally at the discovery; especially as they were thus placed in the dilemma of being obliged, on the one hand, to admit the divine power of this so-called Pretender, or to admit, on the other, that a notorious impostor had performed a single miracle. Entangled thus, they retired for consultation; and, after some parley with each other,* they resolved to liberate the apostles, with threats of violence if they persisted in their course. But the threat was powerless. Peter and John (though the former had before denied his Master in the palace of the presiding High Priest) avowed, to the consternation of the Sanhedrim, their intention to pursue the course they had begun. They were dismissed. When they reached the assembled disciples, the whole company, joining in prayer, mutually fortified themselves against the storm which was evidently soon about to rise.

* If it be a question, how Luke could record the secret conference of the Sanhedrim as a positive fact, it may be observed that it was very possible for the information to be communicated to him by Paul, who was afterwards the companion of his journeys, and who, as at this time in the confidence of the Sanhedrim, may be supposed to have known what took place in their councils.

The progress of Christ's kingdom is never uniform. The present excitement in favor of the new religion was liable to self-deception, and to false profession. These natural consequences were speedily apparent. Two of the company of the disciples (disciples in name, not in truth), having professed to relinquish their property to the common fund of the church, though they had been compelled to no such relinquishment. were ascertained to have kept back a portion of it for their own use. The crime was in their falsehood, and in their hypocritically gratifying by untruth a despicable love of undeserved applause. They were miraculously struck dead; their doom affording an illustration of the supernatural discernment of the leading apostles, and a solemn and fearful warning to those who would promote their own selfish purposes under the guise of the most upright of all religions.

The church continued daily to increase, though the recent fearful occurrence warned off the worldly and unholy. The miraculous powers of the apostles became every day more notorious. Believers multiplied. The fame of the new religion spread into the surrounding towns; and it was deemed a point of solicitude to come even within the shadow of Peter — the leading apostle of the new religion. Meantime the elements of opposition to this new gospel were darkly and sullenly accumulating. The world was gathering materials wherewith to make war upon the church.

The first open persecution arose from the Sadducees. The bold assertion of the doctrine of the resurrection made by the apostles had in it that which, notwithstanding much that was offensive, did not wholly displease the party of the Pharisees, and the hostility of that sect became, in consequence, somewhat reduced. But the Sadducees, always stern in their denunciation of crimes supposed to be against the law, became proportionally irritated, and by their influence the apostles were again imprisoned. On this occasion they were set free by a miraculous interposition, to the no small astonishment and confusion of

those who began to discover that fetters would not hold them. Yet, as the apostles, though free, did not remove from Jerusalem, they were soon again apprehended, and brought before the Sanhedrim; who, after reminding the apostles of their disobedience to their former injunction, expressed themselves as being doubly annoyed, because the tendency of the disciples' movement was to instigate a popular feeling against them as the crucifiers of Jesus of Nazareth. The death of Peter and John would in all probability have followed, but for the interposition of Gamaliel, a doctor of the Sanhedrim, a strict Pharisee, and the instructor of the distinguished Paul, who, with a worldly wisdom probably learned in the Gentile schools of philosophy, counselled the Sadducees to abstain from this rash design; since, if this new religion were divine, they would be guilty of the greatest criminality in opposing it, and, if false, would by persecution only add notoriety to a system which would otherwise fall by its own weight. His prudent counsels prevailed; and, after being scourged, the apostles were dismissed with a new reprimand; only to renew their beloved work with greater energy and success.

The Christian church now began to assume the form of an organized community: not, however, that human organization was at any early time a very distinguished feature of its power; for, though it presented to the world an individualized form of administration, its greatest energy was derived from the living spirituality which distinguished its members, and from the Spirit of the Master which lived, breathed, and acted in them. That there were apostolic directions and injunctions cannot be denied; that there was gradually evolved before the new members of the common faith a model of church polity, in every respect adapted to the conditions of the human mind, and calculated in the best manner to exemplify the loving power beaming forth from the cross, is distinctly evident. But this platform was exhibited rather by acts than by commands; the gospel sought to attract rather than to denounce; and its force was in the loving ten-

derness which breathed throughout it. The principle on which the church was constituted was the confession of Jesus as the Messiah of God, and as the Saviour of the world; a confession involving the acknowledgment of his supreme and sole authority as King of his church, and the consequent necessity of the obedience of the heart, and therefore of the life, to his commands. Of the recognition of these truths baptism became the symbol. The church continued to meet in the Temple; private assemblies, which were perhaps not few, being subsidiary to this greater gathering. The apostles necessarily possessed a large directive and administrative power, as representing the Divine Head from whom their powers were derived, and who taught his church through their agency. Everywhere was loving combination; everywhere, a prevalent spirit of prayer; everywhere, an unquenchable zeal to spread the doctrines of a religion so new and momentous. As no voluntary community can in a sinful world be certainly secured by any human safeguard against the intrusion of the unauthorized and profane, so neither was this primitive society certainly free from some admixture: but such persons formed an almost unappreciable minority. A distinctive feature of the church in Jerusalem was a family community at meals, which took the form of feasts of love, usually terminated by a religious celebration, — the observance of the rite instituted by the Lord after the last passover feast. The most distinguished of those present took the lead in the thanksgivings and ministrations accompanying this service, and such men gradually grew into a company of Elders — according to the term well known among the Jews to designate men of superior wisdom and piety. The language of Luke* appropriately describes their exercises. "They were adhering steadfastly to the instruction of the apostles, and to breaking of bread and prayers."† They needed no elaborate apparatus to give dig-

* Acts 2: 42.

† In the celebrated letter from Pliny to Trajan (infra p. 146), (one of the few documents besides the New Testament which throws light on the prac-

nity to their profession. "The kingdom of God" was "within" them.

But, as the number of the believers increased, a difficulty arose respecting the distribution of the common fund of the church among the poorer members. It is probable that this office had been hitherto intrusted to the Hebrew Jews; the complaint now was, that it was distributed with some partiality, and that the Hellenistic widows had been neglected in the division of the alms. The evil called for a remedy. The desire was, probably, that the apostles themselves, in whose integrity great confidence was reposed, should undertake the duty. This, however, they positively refused to do; but they exhorted the church to choose from among themselves certain men to whom the distribution might be assigned, and whose character and wisdom should render them competent to undertake the office of supplying the necessitous. Pleased with this arrangement, seven men were selected, some of whom were probably Jews, some Greeks,* and one a proselyte of Antioch. It is likely that all these men were evangelists† and baptizers, and they constituted the first *deacons*.‡ Thus, in the simplest yet most effective manner, provision was made for the working of the church, and

tice of the primitive believers), that governor asserts that the Christians "bound themselves by an oath (sacramento se obstringebant) not to commit any wickedness." Does this *sacrament* refer to the Lord's Supper? In all probability, it does not. Such an appellation of the institution was not yet invented. Mosheim believes it rather to refer to the prayers by which the Jews bound themselves to holiness, and that it also alludes to the exhortations of their teachers not to violate that profession. The same letter bears witness to their singing hymns to Christ, as God, by turns, that is antiphonally (invicem), and to their worshipping on a stated day, which was doubtless the first day of the week. — See Mosheim de Rebus ante Constant, p. 146 et seq.

* The names were all Hellenistic, but no certain inference can be derived from this circumstance.

† Acts 21 : 8.

‡ Cyprian (Letter LXIV.) speaks of these men as "deacons, chosen by the apostles as servants of the bishops and the church."

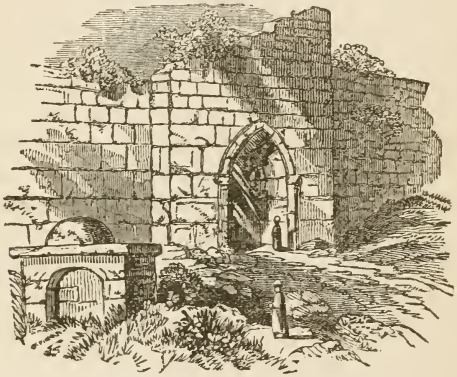
the extension of the truth. So great was the success of the gospel at this time, that even a great number of the Jewish priests avowed the doctrines of the Nazarene.

Among the seven men recently set apart to the diaconal work, Stephen was peculiarly distinguished. Being a Hellenist (that is, one of Hebrew origin, though his language was Greek), he preached frequently in the Hellenistic synagogues, till he drew on himself the enmity of the class to which he belonged, who preferred against him the accusation that he blasphemed God and his servant Moses. Doubtless, like Paul at an after period, he preached Christ with much less reference to the ceremonials of the ancient law than even some of the apostles themselves, whose views were limited by their Jewish prejudices; and the charge probably arose from Stephen's protest against cramping, by appeals to Moses, the form and development of the infant gospel. Brought before the Sanhedrim, Stephen nobly defended his position and the truth itself. In an epitome of the whole Jewish history, he showed that the Jews had, in every age, set themselves in array against God's truth; and, as though he had already a presentiment of his approaching death, he was mainly desirous to lift up a testimony which should ring in the ears of the rulers when he should be no more. Accordingly, he addressed their consciences in such tones of energy and power, as to render them perfectly infuriated; their madness being in no respect disarmed by the seraphic serenity which sat upon the countenance of the speaker. At the conclusion of his address, which bristled with points of truth-loving pungency, he, looking upwards to heaven, declared aloud, in the hearing, be it remembered, of the very council which had condemned Jesus to death, "I see the heavens opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." Exasperated by this to the utmost, the rulers stopped their ears, that they might not listen to him more, and rushed upon him by a common impulse; then, without a formal sentence, and outstripping the powers assigned to them by the Roman law, they dragged him through

the gate of the city, and stoned him at once; the men who called themselves his judges being his actual executioners.

During this terrific scene, the sufferer exhibited the meekness and majesty of his divine religion in his unrepining submission to his sentence; whilst, like his Lord, he employed his last breath in praying for his murderers. Such was the earliest instance of what the church afterwards learned to call "the baptism of blood." These first-fruits of death were afterwards to be succeeded by large harvests of suffering.

The traveller, who in the present day visits the city of Jerusalem, may yet see the gate through which a credible tradition tells him that this first martyr was led forth to die. The scene is immediately adjacent to the area of the Temple (now the



ST. STEPHEN'S GATE, JERUSALEM.

Mosque of Omar), and a pathway leads from the place to the garden of Gethsemane: so that the blood of Stephen was shed not very far from the spot where his Master had poured forth his own in the hour of his agony.

The death of Stephen was followed by a hot persecution of the believers in Jerusalem, who were everywhere seized with violence. Among those specially notorious as their pursuers

was Saul, a Hellenistic Jew and a disciple of Gamaliel. His unspotted character and distinguished talents appear to have already gained for him some popularity with his party. This young man, who had witnessed, and even taken part in, the death of Stephen, attacked the followers of Christ with a mad fury perhaps exceeding that of any of his associates. The body of believers, acting upon the instructions of their leaders, avoided the storm by escape from Jerusalem. Only the apostles remained in seclusion and secrecy. This dispersion was of the utmost value to Christianity, for the scattered believers carried with them precious seeds of truth, which they began to scatter in other lands. Samaria at this time received the truth from Philip, a fellow-deacon of the martyr Stephen.

The position of the Samaritans was favorable to Christianity on account of their very distance from the Jewish truth. As the surgeon finds it easier to reduce an entire fracture than to cure an ill-set limb, so the prejudice of those who held the truth in external formalism was a greater barrier to advance than the unbelief of those who scarcely knew the meaning of the word. Scorned and detested by the Jews, because their religion was an ill-assorted and ungodly union of Judaism with idolatry, — rejecters of the law and the prophets, and setting up a temple and worship for themselves, in opposition to the divinely-instituted apparatus at Jerusalem (now destroyed), — the Samaritans were happily destitute of that overweening self-esteem which despised all teaching, and would admit no innovation. As they were already believers in the resurrection, and had not been pampered by the false expectations of a temporal Messiah, the doctrines of Christ were welcome truths. We are not informed of the precise city in which Philip preached; probably in Sychar, where the ministry of Christ himself had been formerly so successful, and where the doctrines, which his death had perfected, aided by the accompaniment of miracles, won many hearts. The outcast Samaritans heard with the

utmost joy the voice which assured them of reconciliation with their Father in heaven.

Among those who listened to Philip was one whose name and opinions afterwards exercised the most disastrous influence on the early church. This was Simon, a magician, as he professed himself, but one of no commonplace kind. Those who conceive of him as some itinerant mountebank do great injustice to his importance. He was born, we are told by Epiphanius, in Gittæ, a Samaritan village. He taught a system of religion which combined the philosophies of the Pythagorean, Platonic, and Jewish schools, with some horrible dogmas of his own invention. The following account of him, from a new source, possesses much interest:

"This Simon, being an experienced magician, and having deluded many persons after the fashion of Phrasymedes, having been a worker of evil by means of demons, attempted to make himself a god, being a juggler full of folly, whom the apostles put to shame in the Acts. One, not much wiser or more reasonable than himself, was Apsethus, the Libyan, who, panting for distinction, endeavored in Libya to be called a god; respecting whom it seems appropriate to relate a story, not dissimilar from this desire of Simon, the foolish, being in truth one worthy of his undertaking. This Apsethus desired to be a god, and as, though very inventive, he altogether failed of his object, he wished to be at least thought one; and supposed that in a longer time he should become really divine. The foolish Libyans sacrificed to him, believing him to be certified by a divine voice from heaven. For he having gathered into a cage a great number of parrots (for there are many parrots in Libya, and they distinctly mimic the human voice), shut them up, and, after some industry, taught the parrots to say, 'Apsethus is a god.' And when the birds had practised this for a long time, and had learned to say what he thought necessary to be said that Apsethus might be regarded as a god, then, opening the cage, he set the parrots at liberty: and after the birds had flown away, a

voice was heard over all Libya, and the news came even to the land of Greece. And thus the Libyans, being amazed at this utterance of the birds, ignorantly accomplished the villany of Apsethus, holding Apsethus to be a god. But a certain Greek, subtily perceiving the trick of the so-called god, by means of these parrots, not only disgraced him, but reduced to nothing this vagabond and vulgar man. For the Greek, having shut up many of the parrots, taught them anew to say, 'Apsethus having shut us up compelled us to say Apsethus is a god;' and the Libyans, hearing this recantation of the parrots, came in a body and burnt Apsethus alive."

The writer proceeds to make a comparison between Simon and this Apsethus, relating that Simon's doctrine was founded on Moses' declaration that God was "a consuming fire." Simon, following Heraclitus, declared that fire was the original principle of all things; availing himself of this dogma to represent himself as *the Great Power*, or Mind; whilst his companion, a courtesan of Tyre, of whom we shall speak hereafter, assumed the dignity of *the* Great Thought. We shall have further occasion to refer to this man and his doctrines. At this time, however, arrested by the gospel, which Philip was preaching, he avowed himself a believer, and received baptism as a convert to the faith of Christ.*

The news of the conversion of the Samaritans brought the two leading apostles, Peter and John, from Jerusalem, to visit the young believers. They prayed with them, and laid their hands on them, imparting thus the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This action aroused Simon, whose wicked and corrupt heart had grown callous after his first impressions, if they had ever been sincere. He perceived of what advantage to his interests would be the possession of such a power of communicating the charismata as that held by the apostles; and regarding the exercise

* *ΟΡΙΓΕΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΟΥΜΕΝΑ*, Oxford, 1851. We shall have occasion afterwards to observe that this work properly deserves the title *ΙΠΠΟΛΥΤΟΥ ΠΡΟΣ ΑΠΑΣΑΣ ΤΑΣ ΑΙΡΕΣΕΙΣ.*

as if it had been some incantation, unknown to himself, but of singular efficacy, he desired to purchase the secret. "Thy money perish with thee!" was the indignant rebuke of the holy Peter, who saw, with an eagle glance, the baseness and utter depravity of the miscreant. Abashed and confounded at the vehement language in which the apostle denounced his sins, Simon appears for an instant terrified and humble; he entreated Peter's prayers, and promised reformation. But the innate unholiness of the man triumphed over his temporary convictions. In the end he proved himself to be the vilest instrument of falsehood and unrighteousness.

The preaching of Philip was attended by another demonstration of divine power, in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch, whose conversion is so graphically related in the Acts of the Apostles, and who, after worshipping as a Jew at Jerusalem, returned to his court a baptized Christian, to proclaim the new truth he had received to those distant inhabitants. Philip afterwards preached the gospel in many cities, as far as the Jewish Cesarea.

DAMASCUS.

# CHAPTER I.

## DAMASCUS AND PAUL.

No existing city of the East can vie in antiquity or beauty with Damascus. Situated in the midst of an extensive area of cultivated territory, where the lofty ridges of the Anti-Libanus mountains melt away into the level plain beneath, and surrounded by abundant streams rising in those mountains and flowing onwards to the great lake of Bahr-el-Merdj (the Lake of the Meadow) into which they discharge their waters, — for only one river in the district rolls a permanent stream into the sea, — Damascus has long been celebrated for the beauty of its environs, and it well deserves the fame it has received at suc-

cessive periods. To eyes accustomed to the sight of arid rocks and shapeless deserts, where relief from the burning sun is unattainable, the contrast presented by a scene as plentifully irrigated as the most favored spots in temperate zones, whilst the rich vegetation is promoted by the ardent heat of an Oriental climate, is scarcely conceivable by Occidentals. The Turks relate that Mahomet, when looking on the city from the top of a hill, refused to advance within its walls, declaring that there was only one Paradise reserved for mankind, and that he would not receive his in this world. But this story is apocryphal, or rather a mere fable. Damascus has been designated, in Eastern phraseology, "a pearl surrounded by emeralds," the metaphor having been suggested by the extreme whiteness of its walls, in contrast to the rich brightness of the surrounding verdure.

The following is a description of a recent traveller:

"We passed the small village of Dumar, crossed the Barrada (Pharpar?) by the Djissr Dumar, a bridge of two arches, and then took leave of the valley, and passed through a desert region over sterile white chalk mountains, unenlivened by a green leaf or a trace of vegetation. After ascending the hills for some time, we descended to a narrow, winding, rocky path, dazzled with the glare of the sun, and oppressed by heat; and, by direction of our dragoman, leaving my horse and climbing up the rocks to a small cupola supported on columns, the tomb of a santon or a sheikh, one of the most magnificent prospects in the world suddenly burst upon my sight. Like the first view of Constantinople, it is unique, and will bear comparison with no other that I have seen. Conceive our sensations, after journeying in this country through thirsty, dusty plains, across white sterile mountains, diversified only with ruined villages and collections of miserable mud huts, suddenly to find ourselves standing on a lofty ledge of rocks, and looking down from an elevation of one thousand feet upon a vast plain, bordered in the distance by blue mountains, and occupied by a rich, luxuriant

forest, of the walnut, the fig, the pomegranate, the plum, the apricot, the citron, the locust, the pear and the apple, forming a waving grove more than fifty miles in circuit; not such a wood as one sees in France, England or Germany, but possessing a vast variety of tint, a peculiar density and luxuriance of foliage, and a wildly picturesque form, from the branches of the loftier trees throwing themselves up above a rich underwood of pomegranates, citron and oranges, with their yellow, green and brown leaves; and then conceive our sensations, to see grandly rising in the distance, above this vast superficies of luxuriant foliage, the swelling leaden domes, the gilded crescents and the marble minarets of Damascus, while, in the centre of all, winding towards the city, ran the main stream of the river Barrada." *

This celebrated city has a hoary antiquity, before which localities otherwise venerable become modernized. It was founded, according to Josephus, by Uz, the son of Amram, and the grandson of Shem.† That it existed as a city in the days of Abraham is evident from the fact that the steward of that patriarch derived his patronymic from it. It was subsequently seized by David, as an act of retaliation for the war brought by its monarch on the Jewish king, and from that time its name frequently appears as the acknowledged metropolis of Syria. Naaman boasted of its rivers as "better than all the waters of Israel" (thus far with truth), and the Abana and Pharpar of which he spoke still irrigate the plain, though under changed names. Having no natural defences, Damascus has yielded to the storms of successive revolutions, and though often much injured by their violence, has escaped the destruction provoked by the resistance of more powerful cities. The Turks have pronounced it holy, and it has derived great commercial advantages from being one of the stations at which pilgrims rest on the road

* Addison's Damascus and Palmyra, 1838.

† Gen. 10 : 23 ; Joseph. Antiq. 1 § 6. The name by which it is now known is believed by the Latin Christians to represent the latter name.

to Mecca. It is now the most prosperous city in Syria, and the traveller who visits it, not without danger from the jealousy of its inhabitants, unfailingly offers his tribute of admiration to the beauty of its environs, and to the plentiful streams distributed in innumerable channels around the city or through its streets.

When the early Christians were driven from Jerusalem by the persecution which followed the death of Stephen, many of them took refuge in Damascus. They naturally hoped that at the distance of one hundred and thirty miles they should be safe from the hostility which assailed the new religion. In this calculation, however, they were mistaken. The Sanhedrim claimed authority over Jews and their synagogues, even in countries which were remote; and it is possible that Damascus was at this time subject to Roman power. The active zeal of the young Saul, a Pharisee, by descent a Benjamite, though actually a native of Tarsus in Cilicia,* led him to project an enterprise to Damascus, under the sanction of the High Priest, with a view to compel the return of the fugitives. Guided by the impulses of an honest but unenlightened zeal for the pre-eminence of the religion of Moses, and little disposed to inquire into the merits of the system against which all his native prejudices were arrayed, Saul prepared to repeat at Damascus the outrages he had already effected at Jerusalem. But Omnipotence stood ready to arrest his course. When near the city (the traditional spot is still shown), surrounded by the men who formed his convoy, a fiery flash, "above the brightness of the sun," struck him to the ground, and a loud and awful voice addressed him by name, inquiring, "Why persecutest thou me?" Saul knew the voice to be that of the glorified Saviour

* Tarsus was at this time eminent for its schools of philosophy, and was esteemed worthy of being ranked with Athens and Alexandria. In what way Paul obtained the rights of a Roman citizen is somewhat uncertain; for, though Tarsus was declared free by Augustus, it did not become a Roman colony till some time afterwards.

himself, who commanded him to go into the city, where he would receive further instructions. Dazzled with the light, which had blinded him, in consternation at his position, his conscience terrified, and his reason convinced of his folly, Saul arose from the earth a trembling and altered man. Thus he was led into the city, where he passed three days in blindness and without food, in a state of the utmost alarm and anxiety, yet constantly employed in beseeching the mercy of that Jesus whose religion he had blasphemed and persecuted. At length Ananias, a Christian, was directed to bring to the penitent a message of divine forgiveness. to restore by miracle his sight, and to convey to him the Holy Ghost by imposition of hands. Paul was, at the same time, appointed an apostle, whose special mission should be to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles. The persecutor was no more; the change effected on Saul's mind was a spiritual transformation of his whole habits of thought and feeling, and it constituted one of the most distinguished of those miracles which attest the truth of the Christian religion. Saul was introduced to the Christian body at Damascus, and though so sudden a conversion induced them at first to distrust the sincerity of the new disciple, their suspicions were speedily dispelled, and Paul began forthwith to make known in the synagogues the process through which he had passed, and to preach the religion which until now he had attempted to uproot. "He confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this person" (this Jesus) "is the Christ."*

The traditions of Damascus still preserve the alleged localities connected with this memorable transaction. St. Paul's gate, — the house of Ananias; now converted into a mosque, — the house of Judas, where Paul rested, — are still shown. Such stories were easy of manufacture in the superstitious days which demanded them. There is more probability that the street which bore, in the first century, the name of "Straight,"

* Acts 9 : 22.

occupied the same position with that still leading to the castle, a mile in length, bearing the same designation.

Immediately after this event, Saul left Damascus for Arabia, where he remained three years,* probably preaching the gospel in those new districts, and preparing himself, by meditation and converse with God, for his future duties. The knowledge of the gospel, however, in which he was afterwards so eminent, was gained by this apostle not from study, but from a supernatural intuition, miraculously granted to him for this purpose. At the expiration of the interval, having taken the name of Paul, he returned to Damascus, now under the government of Aretas, King of Arabia, and began to preach in the synagogues the doctrines of the crucified Messiah. Aretas was the father of Herod's (the tetrarch's) divorced wife, and was at this time at war with his son-in-law. It is not impossible that some representation made to Aretas that Paul, as judged of by his past character, was a spy of Herod's, prompted an effort to apprehend him. It is more likely, however, that the cause of this hostility was connected with the Christian faith. Damascus was accordingly garrisoned by Aretas for this purpose,† but Paul escaped, being lowered in a basket from a house on the wall.

About this time another occurrence took place which stood in an important relation to Paul's future ministry among the Gentiles. His conversion had stopped the progress of the Christian persecution. Availing himself of this interval, Peter had visited the various bodies of believers "in all quarters,"‡ declaring to them the gospel of God, and performing miracles corroborative of that gospel and of his own apostleship. In the course of his progress he had visited at Joppa (Jaffa) a disciple named Simon. Whilst there, he had received a miraculous vision, remarkably coinciding with an invitation sent to him by Cornelius, a Roman centurion then residing at

* Gal. 1 : 17. † 2 Cor. 11 : 32, 33. ‡ Acts 9 : 32.

Cesarea, the effect of which was to convince him that it was the divine intention to admit Gentiles, equally with Jews, to the privileges of the new gospel. Opposed as the course was to all the prejudices of his earnest Jewish mind, Peter had been thus led to visit Cornelius, and to declare truths entirely at variance with his previous prepossessions. When he returned to Jerusalem his conduct excited considerable surprise among the apostles. But his declaration of the divine authority under which he had acted silenced all doubts, and compelled them to admit that the distinction between Jew and Gentile was designed to be no longer recognized.

Such was the state of things when Paul, after an absence of some years, returned to Jerusalem, not as he left it, a proud and boasting Pharisee, but a converted, earnest, indomitable apostle. His present object was to see Peter, personally the most distinguished among the disciples of the Lord. At Jerusalem, as at Damascus, the first feeling of the brethren was one of suspicion as to the genuineness of his conversion, and a natural fear lest these new professions of Christianity might only prove the introduction to further outrages. It may seem strange that the news of a transformation so remarkable should not have preceded Paul's arrival. But the communications with Damascus were at this time suspended, and it is probable that fear upon the part of believers, and mortification on that of the Pharisees, would cause a cautious suppression, for the present, of the fact. Barnabas, however, who, like Paul, was a Hellenist, and who is said to have been associated with him in receiving the instructions of Gamaliel, brought him to the apostles, — that is, to Peter and John, for Paul saw no others,* — and related to them his remarkable history. Paul remained at this time fifteen days in Jerusalem, principally employed in addressing and arguing with the Hellenistic Jews in their synagogues. Irritated by his opposition to the bondage of the

* Gal. 1 : 19.

Jewish ceremonial law, this party formed a conspiracy to take away his life. A special revelation warned Paul* to depart from Jerusalem, and announced to him that the Gentiles were the objects of his future mission. In obedience to this divine message, Paul left the metropolis, passing by land through Judea and Syria, and making himself known to the churches in the way as a converted persecutor, till he reached his native city, Tarsus.

The storm of opposition to Christian truth was now lulled for a season; the hatred of the Jews to the new religion being, for the time, forgotten in a new calamity, which threatened the persecutors themselves. At this period, Caius, surnamed Caligula,† was wearing the imperial purple, having succeeded his uncle, the debauched and capricious Tiberius, whom he caused to be smothered with pillows, after a reign of twenty-two years. His reign had commenced with a great affectation of wisdom and clemency; nor was it any impeachment of either that he sentenced Herod the tetrarch, together with his wife Herodias, to perpetual banishment.‡ But the native traits of Caius' character could not be long concealed, and the remainder of his course was marked by an insane and infuriated rashness almost incredible. Murder was his delight; and the ingenuity of his mind was tasked to administer it with new varieties of cruelty and torture. On one occasion, when at the games of the circus all the malefactors had been despatched, the emperor ordered the spectators themselves to be thrown to the wild beasts, their tongues being first cut out, that no imprecations might be

* Acts 22 : 17—19.

† His sobriquet was derived from a military jest, formed on the *caligæ*, or shoes, of the common soldiers, which Caius wore when a youth.

‡ It was a little earlier that Pilate, the weak and unprincipled judge who condemned our Lord to death, was displaced from his procuratorship by Vitellius. Pilate hastened to Rome to appeal to Tiberius, but found that emperor dead. Eusebius declares that he committed suicide. A well-known tradition has connected the scene of his death with one of the Righi Mountains, in Switzerland.

uttered. Victims were tortured to death before his eyes, to give zest to his meals; and his absurd and abominable wish was, that the body of his subjects had but one head, that he might enjoy the pleasure of decapitating them all at the same moment.*

* The temper and wisdom of Caligula in his dealings with the Jews may be adequately estimated from the following narrative. It relates to the deputation sent to Rome at the time of the tumults of Alexandria:

"After long and wearisome attendance, the deputies were summoned to a final audience. To judge so grave a cause, as Philo complains with great solemnity, the emperor did not appear in a public court, encircled by the wisest of his senators; the embassy was received in the apartments of two contiguous villas in the neighborhood of Rome, called after Lamia and Mæcenas. The bailiffs of these villas were commanded, at the same time, to have all the rooms thrown open for the emperor's inspection. The Jews entered, made a profound obeisance, and saluted Caligula as Augustus and emperor; but the sarcastic smile on the face of Caius gave them little hope of success. 'You are, then,' said he, showing his teeth as he spoke, 'those enemies of the gods who alone refuse to acknowledge my divinity, but worship a deity whose name you dare not pronounce;' and here, to the horror of the Jews, he uttered the awful name. The Greek deputies from Alexandria, who were present, thought themselves certain of their triumph, and began to show their exultation by insulting gestures; and Isidore, one of the accusers of Flaccus, came forward to aggravate the disobedience of the Jews. He accused them of being the only nation who had refused to sacrifice for the emperor. The Jews, with one voice, disclaimed the calumny, and asserted that they had three times offered sacrifice for the welfare of the emperor, and indeed had been the first to do so on his accession. 'Be it so,' rejoined the emperor; 'ye have sacrificed *for* me, but not *to* me!' The Jews stood aghast and trembling. On a sudden, Caius began to run all over the house, up-stairs and down-stairs, inspecting the men's and the women's apartments, finding fault and giving orders; while the poor Jews followed him from room to room, amidst the mockery of the attendants. After he had given his orders, the emperor suddenly turned round to them: 'Why is it that you do not eat pork?' The whole court burst into peals of laughter. The Jews temperately replied that different nations have different usages; some persons would not eat lamb. 'They are right,' said the emperor; 'it is an insipid meat.' After further trial of their patience, he demanded, with his usual abruptness, on what they grounded their right of citizenship. They began a long and grave legal argument; but they had not proceeded far, when Caius began to run up

With the mad rashness which characterized all his proceedings, Caligula commissioned Petronius, now the Governor of Syria in place of Vitellius, to set up his imperial statue, gilded and of colossal size, in the Temple at Jerusalem as "the manifested Jupiter," * and to put to death all who offered resistance. The consternation of the Jews was excessive. Death was, in their eyes, infinitely preferable to such a profanation. Petronius remonstrated with them; pleaded the express commands he had received; invited and urged them to obey. He could not gain, however, a single point. Yet, wiser than his hair-brained master, he shrunk from the massacre which could alone accomplish the imperial will, and refused to deluge the country with blood. In the issue, the decree was suspended. This passage of the emperor's history accords so precisely with the interval of peace enjoyed by the early believers as to leave no doubt that this mad project, directed against the Jews, turned their attention from the followers of the new religion to seek their own safety.

We may avail ourselves of this pause in the church's history to present to the reader a rapid view of the character of the most distinguished apostles.

The most prominent among them at this time was Simon, son of Jonas, or John, originally a fisherman on the lake of Galilee, to whom Jesus had given the name Peter (Rock), in allusion to his natural firmness and to the fundamental part he would sus-

and down the great hall, and to order that some blinds, of a kind of transparent stone, like glass, which admitted the light, and excluded the air and heat, should be put up against the windows. As he left the room, he asked the Jews, with a more courteous air, if they had anything to say to him; they began again their harangue, in the middle of which he started away into another chamber, to see some old paintings. The Jews, at length, were glad to retreat, and felt happy to escape with their lives. Caius gave them their dismissal in these words: 'Well, after all, they do not seem so bad; but rather a poor foolish people, who cannot believe that I am a god.'"

* Euseb. Eccl. Hist. ii. 76.

tain in the new economy. The man corresponded to his important position. He was ardent, energetic, bold; his mind was powerful to seize upon central facts, to appreciate their value, to hold them with an unflinching grasp. He was the first disciple who apprehended the grandeur of the transfiguration; the first who recognized the divinity of his Lord; the first who saw the true bearings of the resurrection of Jesus. His rapid perceptions, as the rapid perceptions of the impulsive usually are, were alloyed with not a little rashness and liability to error; and this tendency was most signally manifested when, seeing Jesus led before the Jewish tribunal, and apparently unable to extricate himself, Peter imagined his claims to be ended, and denied him to be his Master. But when his mind had grasped the important facts of the resurrection, Peter was himself once more, and, under the operation of the Holy Spirit, his character became incredibly advanced and purified. From the day of Pentecost he became emphatically "a Rock:" the prominent speaker; the fearless champion; the daring accuser of his Lord's murderers; the quick detector of sin; the warm encourager of the faint-hearted; and his addresses possessed a directness and fervor which swept away the objections of his auditors before him. That he possessed a superiority over the rest of his brethren is evident; but it was a superiority of character and zeal, and not of office; the keys, though first promised to him, having been afterwards consigned to the other apostles as well as to himself. Peter was great in initiatory movements; for that work he was selected. Others might surpass him in succeeding movements, as the pages of the Acts of the Apostles make clearly manifest.

Next to Peter stands *John*, a native also of Galilee, son of Zebedee and Salome. He probably possessed some wealth, for which reason Jesus, in dying, had committed his mother to his especial care; to him his Lord felt an especial attachment, as to the readiest and most admiring appreciator of his own heaven-born doctrines. John's profound veneration for the *words* of

Jesus, whilst others attached more importance to his *works*, — his instinctive tenacity of great principles, and the depth and warmth of his love for his Master, are distinguished features in his delightful character. Though powerful as a preacher, he was inferior to Peter; but, as a teacher of truth, he was Peter's superior. The two formed a pair. John was to Peter what Melancthon was, in an after age, to Luther, — the expounder of his doctrine, the moderator of his zeal, the corrector of his errors.

James, the son of Zebedee, was the brother of John, and one of his Lord's most favored disciples. Like John, he was an eminent preacher, but like him also had been liable to false impressions in favor of Christ's personal kingdom; whilst both of them had, during the life of Jesus, been peculiarly ambitious of a distinguished place among his temporal followers.

Of the others we can only briefly speak. Andrew, the brother of Simon, and Philip, were both natives of Bethsaida, and heretofore disciples of John the Baptist. The latter appears to have been remarkable for his timidity, and extremely prone to raise difficulties where spiritual views were demanded.* Bartholomew (Bar Tolmai, the son of Ptolemy) was, perhaps, the surname of Nathanael, who was introduced to Jesus by Philip, and at whose house, at Cana, it is possible the miracle of the marriage-feast was performed. Matthew, son of Alpheus, held, before his institution to the apostleship, the post of inferior collector of the customs at Capernaum. Clemens Alexandrinus mentions him as an ascetic, and an abstainer from animal food. Soon after our Lord's death, he appears to have written his gospel, in Jerusalem. Whether it were originally composed in Hebrew or in Greek, is a point which has been much contested. It is not improbable that the former was the truth, and that the translation was made at an early period by Matthew himself. †

* John 6 : 1—7.

† Matthew's gospel is unquestionably the earliest specimen of inspired Christian writing. The story of Agbarus, King of Edessa, of the letter he

James, Matthew's brother, called James the Less, either because of his inferior stature, or his less distinguished eminence, was brother to Matthew, was a son of Mary (Salome), and was a relation (usually called brother) of our Lord. Such was probably also Simon, called Zelotes, to distinguish him from Peter. Matthias, elected in the place of Judas, is little mentioned. It is, indeed, clearly evident that the vacant place of Judas was really filled by Paul; and Matthias was, it would appear, only an appointment *ad interim*. A vague tradition records that Matthias was a preacher of the faith in Cappadocia, and that he was martyred in Colchis.*

The characters of Barnabas and Paul will be best appre-

wrote to Christ to cure him of his distemper, and of the answer returned by our Lord, is worthy of no credence. It is, indeed, recorded by Eusebius, who produces as his authority the archives of the church at Edessa. That such documents existed in Eusebius' day may be admitted; how they came there, is the question. The whole story is self-contradictory.

* The following senseless allusion to the disciples of Christianity is extracted by Lardner from the Babylonian Talmud:

"The Rabbins have taught that there were five disciples of Jesus, Matthai, Nakai, Nezer, Boni, and Toda. When Matthai was brought forth (to be condemned to death) he said to the judge, 'Shall Matthai be slain? But it is written, *When shall I come* [Matai] *and appear before God?*' (Psalm 42 : 2.) But they answered, 'Yes, Matthai shall be slain: for it is written, *When* [Matai] *shall he die, and his name perish?*' (Psalm 41 : 5.) When Nakai was brought out, he said, 'Shall Nakai be slain? But it is written, *Thou shalt not kill the innocent* [Nakai] *and the just.*' (Ex. 23 : 7.) But they said, 'Yes, Nakai shall be slain; for it is written, *In the secret places does he murder the innocent* [Naki].' (Psalm 10 : 8.) When they brought forth Nezer, he said to them, 'And shall Nezer be slain? But it is written, *A branch* [Nezer] *shall grow out of his roots.*' (Is. 11 : 1.) But they answered, 'Yes, Nezer shall be slain. For it is written, *Thou art cast out of thy grave as an abominable branch.*' (Is. 14 : 19.) When they brought out Boni, he said, 'And shall Boni be slain? But it is written, Israel is *my son* [Beni], *even my first-born.*' (Ex. 4 : 22.) But they said, 'Yes, Boni shall be slain. It is written, *Behold I will slay thy son* [Bincka], *thy first-born.*' (Ex. 4 : 23.) When they brought out Toda, he said to them, 'And shall Toda be slain? It is written, *A psalm to praise* [Lethoda].' (Psalm 100.) But they answered, 'Yes, Toda shall be slain. For it is written, *Whoso offereth praise* [Toda] *glorifieth me.*'"

hended from the course of the narrative which describes their labors.

The church of Christ had continued to increase. Those whom the late persecution scattered had sown in many quarters the seeds of divine truth. Phœnicia, a district on the north of Galilee, Cyprus, and Antioch. the celebrated city of Syria, had, among other spots, received the new revelation with welcome. When intelligence of the latter event reached the church at Jerusalem, they commissioned Barnabas to visit that metropolis. Barnabas (who is called by Luke an apostle*) was a native of the island of Cyprus, by birth a Levite, and bore the name of "The Son of Consolation," because, according to Chrysostom, of the peculiar talent he possessed in comforting the afflicted. He had been early distinguished for the sacrifices he had made in the cause of Christ, having sold his land that he might contribute the proceeds to the common fund of the church at Jerusalem.† He witnessed with great joy the progress of the truth in Antioch, whilst he directed his preaching to the confirmation of the young converts. His acquaintance with Paul, and with the un-Jewish character of his opinions, taught him that the new apostle would be especially useful in promoting the progress of the gospel in that Gentile quarter. He therefore went to Tarsus, where Paul was then residing, and brought him thence to Antioch, where, during the space of a year, they pursued their joint labors with great success. The disciples of Antioch were the first who were distinguished by the name of Christians; an appellation which, in the first instance, was probably one of derision, — for the Antiochians were celebrated for their humor, — but which, like the term "Methodist" in modern days, was appropriated by the designated class as an honor. Happy they who are worthy to bear it!

Whilst Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch, a Christian teacher came thither from Jerusalem, who, endowed with a

* Acts 14 : 13. † Acts 4 : 36, 37.

prophetic spirit, predicted an approaching famine, the weight of which would fall on the territory of Judea. The event took place shortly after.

The monstrous vices and recklessness of Caligula having, by the end of four years, rendered the continuance of his reign intolerable, that emperor was assassinated by a secret league; whilst the senate raised the weak and woman-led Claudius, uncle of Caius, to the vacant imperial throne. "In his reign," says Eusebius, "there was a famine that prevailed over the whole world; an event, indeed, which has been handed down by historians far removed from our sentiments; and by which the prediction of the prophet Agabus, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, respecting the impending famine over the whole earth, received its fulfilment." * It was during its continuance that Helena, Queen of Adiabene (a district of Assyria), spent large sums in alleviating the sufferings of the Jews, procuring grain from Egypt, and distributing it among the perishing.† At this crisis, the believers in Antioch, taught by that divine religion which is essential love, contributed considerable sums for the relief of their afflicted brethren, sending Barnabas and Paul to Jerusalem to convey and administer their bounty. The messengers were well chosen, being Barnabas, who had resigned his possessions to the mother church, and was already acceptable to them, and Paul, who, perhaps, needed an errand like the present to increase his popularity with the more tenacious Judaistic Christians.

The visit of Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem coincided with another remarkable circumstance in early ecclesiastical history. Herod Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great, now possessed, under the title of King, nearly all the territory heretofore held by his grandfather. His history had been remarkable. He was the son of Aristobulus, and grandson of Mariamne, wife

* Eccl. Hist. book ii. ch. vii.

† Eccl. Hist. book ii. c. xii.

of Herod the Great, so cruelly put to death by order of her husband. His earlier days had been spent in Rome, where he had lived under the protection of Antonia, the friend of Berenice, Agrippa's mother, and who was also related by marriage to Tiberius. The splendor in which Agrippa lived had plunged him in great pecuniary straits. He was banished by Tiberius to his native country, and took up his residence for some time in Idumæa, where his destitution was so great as to suggest to him the thought of dying by his own hands. At length, through the intervention of his sister, Herodias, the unlawful* wife of Herod Antipas, he obtained the post of Governor of Tiberias, till, mortified by some observations dropped at a banquet by Herod Antipas, he retired to Antioch, which place he was again compelled to leave in disgrace, and, after some adventures, returned to Rome, to be once more reinstated in the favor of Tiberius. Yet the death of that emperor found Agrippa in prison, for treasonable words uttered in the presence of Caligula. Caius, on his accession, released him, and appointed him king of the territories formerly held by Agrippa's deposed uncle, Philip. Agrippa is said to have forwarded strong remonstrances to the imperial court against that edict which Petronius had been commanded to execute. On the accession of Claudius, he became invested with the government of Judea and Samaria in addition to his previous dignities, and, desiring to ingratiate himself with the Jews, began, in the last year of his reign, a persecution of the Christians, whom he affected to regard as enemies of the ancient Jewish faith. His first victim was James, the son of Zebedee, who, with Peter and John, had been the witness of some of the most remarkable transactions of the Lord. The officer by whom this apostle was led before the civil tribunal was so affected by the pious fortitude of his prisoner, as to confess himself a Christian, and actually suffered

* Unlawful, not because she was Antipas' sister-in-law, but because her husband was still living.

death at the same moment with James. As the two proceeded to execution, the converted pagan besought forgiveness of the apostle, who, kissing him, exclaimed, "Peace be to thee!" and both were executed at the same time.*

Delighted with the popularity which this act of barbarity gained him among the Jews, Agrippa next proceeded, during the same feast of the Passover, to capture Simon Peter, intending to keep him in prison until some great festival should present a public opportunity for his execution. But no man dies before his time; and God had yet work for this distinguished apostle to do. Peter was accordingly saved by a miraculous intervention. The dreadful death of Agrippa occurred immediately after this remarkable release. He had appointed a feast at Cesarea, in honor of the reigning emperor. The festival was attended by the principal officers and nobility of his kingdoms. On the second day of the feast the monarch appeared clothed in a robe of silver, at an hour when the early morning sun might shine dazzlingly upon it, giving him thus an appearance of the most resplendent glory. His flatterers set up the shout "A present god!" and hastened to solicit mercy from his divinity. The king received the applause with complacency. But, as he turned his eyes upwards, he saw an owl sitting over his head, and remembered that it had been foretold to him that when he should again see that bird — which had once been to him an omen of good fortune — he would die within five days. He was seized with sickness, and was borne into his palace tormented with the most excruciating internal agonies. After lingering in anguish for five days, in the midst of the mourning and lamentation of his subjects, the wretched king expired.† His awful death restored peace to the church.

After a short residence in Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas, now accompanied by John Mark, nephew of Barnabas, returned

* Clemens Alex. apud Euseb. book ii. c. ix.

† Acts 12 : 20–25, compared with Joseph. Antiq. xix. ch. viii.

to Antioch, and there began the first great movement taken by the church to realize the promises of salvation to the Gentiles, and to demonstrate the adaptation of Paul to the great work of conveying to them the news of the gospel salvation. After a season of fasting and prayer, these two devoted men were specially designated by the Spirit to the great undertaking of evangelizing the heathen.

Sixteen years had now elapsed since the Pentecostal miracle; twelve since the conversion of Paul himself. The gospel had, in the mean time, taken strong hold on the minds of a considerable body of the Jews, and a powerful fulcrum had been already obtained from which to act upon the Gentile community. As Jerusalem had been the central point from which the descendants of Abraham had been instructed in Christianity, and Peter had been the leading apostle to convey to them its doctrines, so now Antioch, already regarded by the Roman empire as the metropolis of the Eastern kingdoms, was to be the station whence, under the personal inspection of an apostle superior to even Peter himself, the streams of healing influence should flow out into the Gentile world.

Embarking from Seleucia, a seaport at the mouth of the Orontes, these disciples, accompanied by John Mark, set sail for Cyprus, — then called, from the prolific richness of its products, Macaria, or "the blessed." They landed at Salamis, where they probably found Jewish Christians, and thence proceeded to Paphos, at the opposite extremity of the island, where stood the celebrated temple — afterwards destroyed by an earthquake — dedicated to Venus, spreading licentiousness and dissoluteness among the inhabitants. Here the proconsul Sergius Paulus listened to the gospel, though earnestly dissuaded from doing so by Elymas, a Jewish sorcerer, who, as a punishment, was smitten with a temporary blindness by Paul's miraculous power. The marvel astonished the proconsul, and greatly tended to hasten his ultimate conversion to Christianity.

From this place the apostles sailed up the Cestrus to Perga,

on the south side of Asia Minor. At this point John Mark left the apostles. What were his reasons we are not informed, but his motives were probably not creditable to his Christian profession,— at least, not in accordance with the apostolic work to which he had devoted himself. Barnabas and Paul afterwards came to Antioch in Pisidia (the lesser Antioch), where Paul entering the synagogue preached to the Jews. His earnest addresses, however, roused the enmity of the Hebrew population, and led Paul to declare that, though according to the order of the divine appointment he and his coadjutor had first proclaimed the gospel to the favored people, yet, since the Jews treated it with defiance and disdain, it would henceforward become their duty to proclaim it to the despised heathen without scruple. Rendered still more hostile by this announcement, Paul and Barnabas, after they had spent some time in preaching through the district, were expelled from the territory, "shaking off the dust of their feet," as commanded by their Lord, against such refusers of mercy, and advanced to Iconium. Here the usual success and the usual opposition attended them, the latter compelling them to fly to Lystra. The miraculous cure of a lame man in this city induced the ignorant multitude to suppose the apostles to be the deities with whose names they were most familiar, and they prepared to offer them sacrifice; an act which aroused the indignant horror of the apostles. Such idolatry was, however, extremely transient; and when some of the inhabitants of Iconium, having come to Lystra, endeavored to prejudice the minds of the Lycaonians against them, they speedily succeeded in spreading the belief that Paul was an impostor, and they stoned him till they left him for dead. He was restored, however, — probably by a miracle, — and was enabled to reach Derbe, where he and Barnabas preached with success; and, undaunted by former persecutions, afterwards returned to Pisidia and Lycaonia, endeavoring to establish the minds of the disciples in the faith they had so recently received. After this the apostles returned again to Antioch, where, sum-

moning the church, they related — to their joy — the progress they had made in this great enterprise. Such were the first fruits of a way of salvation proclaimed to the Gentiles; and such the earnest perseverance of the primitive church in dispensing its life-giving truths.

The gospel began thus to assert its claims to be a religion for the world. Its tidings, borne away by converts in all directions, together with the direct labors of the apostles and disciples themselves, had already made such an impression, by the agency of the Spirit of God, as to lead the more hopeful to believe that it would speedily become the religion of the whole earth. Periods of external prosperity are usually, however, times of danger; and sources of concern now opened themselves before Paul and Barnabas, inducing considerable anxiety lest so much good should be destroyed. There arose in the church of Antioch a contention among the disciples themselves, the materials of which had been long underlying the infant Christianity, and which at this time burst forth into a portentous flame.

It is easy to perceive how the notions of temporal preeminence, which formed part of the education of every Jew, would (such is the imperfection of the best systems) become transferred to Christianity itself. This national longing after external distinctions was continually developing itself among our Lord's own disciples, and even in his own presence. The rebukes of Jesus cut away the foliage of the ambition, but did not succeed in destroying the root. Time, therefore, produced an after-growth. The distinctions between the circumcised and the uncircumcised, sanctified by the practice of ages, could not be forgotten; and the contempt with which the Jew almost instinctively regarded the Gentile could not admit the idea of participation in the same common benefits. Such was the feeling which strongly asserted itself at this prosperous period. The close intercourse existing between the principal bodies of Christians in Judea and in Syria brought frequently to Antioch

members of the church at Jerusalem. These did not hesitate to assert that Gentiles ought not to be recognized as in a condition of salvation, until they had submitted to the Mosaic circumcision. Such a doctrine could not fail to be unpalatable to those who, with far other views, had sacrificed all in preaching the truth to the Gentiles; and it was especially distasteful to Paul, who had been divinely taught the contrary, and had personally learned the religion of Jesus by a process which had utterly prostrated his Jewish pride and boasted distinctions. And the view thus disseminated was not only unpalatable, but a perversion of the very nature and design of the gospel; it denied God's spirituality, it derogated from the claims of Christianity as a system of universal love, and it fed the worldly pride and passions of the human heart. The subject was vehemently agitated at Antioch, and threatened to be so over all the church. That the disastrous consequences of its continuance and spread might be averted, it was determined again to send Paul and Barnabas as a deputation to the church at Jerusalem. They departed accordingly, taking Titus with them, declaring on their way through Phenice and Samaria the novel yet glorious news of the conversion of the Gentiles, and inspiring grateful joy by the intelligence. Arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the whole body of the church,* with the apostles (or at least those of them who were then at Jerusalem) and presbyters, before whom they repeated the statement, reciting at the same time the obstructions thrown in their way by the Pharisaic party.† Strong disputations followed; and it was resolved that the whole subject should be debated in an assembly, at which all parties concerned should appear by representatives.‡ On this occasion, though in opposition to his own prejudices, Peter avowed his convictions derived from the case of Cornelius, and protested against the imposition of old Pharisaical and ritual

* Gal. 2 : 1.

† This rendering accords best with the whole construction. Acts 15 : 4, 5.

‡ Acts 15 : 12, 13.

observances on Gentile Christians. Paul and Barnabas next spoke, and set forth the facts of the case, corroborating their views by citations from the Jewish scriptures. After this, James, who appears to have acted as president, and who, as a strict Jew, was in a position to become the moderator, showed, by entirely Jewish argument, that the tone of Hebrew prophecy relative to the calling of the Gentiles confirmed the statements of Peter, and proposed that they should place no difficulties in the way of these believing heathens, but should only exhort, as a matter of wise and prudent precaution, that all new converts should occupy the position to which the proselytes of the gate were pledged — that they should abstain from fornication, from strangled animals, and from blood, all which practices, though not of the same order of moral importance, were necessary to show their abhorrence of heathenism. This measure of accommodation met the views of the assembly, and appears afterwards to have been adopted by the whole church at Jerusalem, in whose name a letter was drawn up, and sent by a deputation from their body, who accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their return. The deputation consisted of Barsabas and Silas. Thus, by open discussion and moderate action, a formidable distraction was prevented, and the church of Antioch rejoiced at the happy issue of so threatening a deliberation. But when Christianity existed in the vigor of a life-inspiring Spirit, free debate could not endanger its real unity.

Some references made in the course of this discussion would seem to justify the impression that, even amongst the most eminent of the apostles themselves, the apostleship of Paul was still regarded with some suspicion. There is a decision about 1 Cor. 9: 1, 2, and Gal. 2: 6, 7, which seems referable to some such insinuation.

The zeal for the propagation of the gospel which burned in the minds of Paul and Barnabas prompted them, after some time spent in the more quiet labors connected with the church at Antioch, to undertake another and more extensive missionary

journey. But some embarrassments attended their first entrance on this renewed work. Barnabas, who cannot be exculpated from the charge of nepotism in the transaction, was desirous that John Mark, his nephew, whom he had brought back with him from Jerusalem, should be his companion in this journey, whilst Paul, whose inflexible principle was apparent in all his movements, thought that a man who had left them so unwarrantably upon a previous occasion was not well fitted for so self-denying an undertaking. The result was a dispute between these devoted servants, which ended in their choosing distinct spheres of action, Barnabas departing in one direction with his nephew John Mark, whilst Paul, with Silas, journeyed in another. The difference was afterwards healed. In pursuance of his nobly ambitious plans never to interfere with another man's sphere of labor, but rather to strike out new paths for himself, Paul, having visited the churches of Syria and Cilicia, and taken Timothy, a very young Christian, as a companion of his journey, proceeded to Phrygia, and thence to Galatia and Mysia, intending to go into Bithynia, from which place, however, he was divinely withheld, God having destined him to a much greater work. During this journey, the apostle labored with his own hands for his subsistence; a noble proof of that disinterestedness in the cause of his Master which would not allow him to demand his spiritual rights, though he maintained them, on more than one occasion, to be just. Whilst at Troas, Paul was joined by Luke the physician, whose medical skill appears to have proved of service in forwarding the great apostolical design. A supernatural vision beheld by Paul at Troas, representing a Macedonian imploring spiritual aid, appeared to him a sufficient intimation that God called him to take an immediate journey to that country. He accordingly crossed the sea, that he might personally introduce the gospel into Europe. The first place he visited was Philippi, which, unless otherwise informed, one would scarcely suspect to have been so recently the theatre of conflicts involving the destinies of the world, so little

notice do the sacred writers take of anything except the essentials of their work. The Jews in Philippi do not appear to have been sufficiently numerous to possess a synagogue, but at their customary place of prayer (which was by a river-side) Paul addressed them on their Sabbath. His ministration and miracles were so effective, that many believed the gospel, and when Paul and Silas were imprisoned by the Duumvirs, under the charge of introducing strange customs into a Roman city, even the jailer himself became a convert to the faith, and received baptism at the hands of the apostles; and after Paul had left the city, the Christians performed the rare act of forwarding to him sums of money for his support, sending aid to him twice at Thessalonica, once to Corinth, and, at a later period, relieving his necessities when he was a prisoner at Rome.

The next station visited by the apostle was Thessalonica, one of the principal cities of Macedonia, named after Thessalonice, wife of Cassander. Here he found many Jews (as, indeed, there are in this modern day), some of whom thankfully received his message. But others, enraged at the doctrines which he taught, promoted a tumult, and, to avoid the consequences, Paul and Silas left the city for Berea, where, after he declared his gospel, the Thessalonian Jews pursued him, compelling him to advance to Athens, whilst Silas and Timothy were left behind.

Nothing can be more interesting than to contemplate the apostle, with his new gospel, arriving at this celebrated city, which, whether we regard its learning, its political importance, or its relation to the whole intelligent world, was at that time not far sunk below the pinnacle of its fame. This capital of Attica had now been existent sixteen hundred years, and derived its name from its dedication to Athene (Minerva), who was regarded as its presiding deity. It was divided into two parts: the *lower city*, built upon a spacious plain, communicating by a long fortification with the Piræus, its port; and the *Acropolis*, or *upper city*, built upon a rocky hill, where its magnificent buildings

stood proudly preëminent, having, as the most conspicuous among them, the vast Parthenon, constructed and decorated, at an enormous expense, by the first statuaries and artists which Greece could furnish in the age of Pericles, and near to it the gigantic statue of the tutelary goddess, to whom the Parthenon was dedicated. Though Athens did not exhibit the varied

ATHENS.

splendor of Rome, it far surpassed that city in taste and elegance, and the names which are associated with it must ever, whilst the page of history possesses any interest, awaken the most electrifying associations. The groves in which the Academics surrounded their master — the scene of the battle of Salamis — and the spot from which Xerxes witnessed the conflict so disastrous to his fortunes — the temple of Theseus, one of the most perfect of Grecian edifices — the Stadium — the Lantern of Demosthenes — the choragic monument of Lysicrates — and, in the district of which Athens is the capital,

Marathon, the battle-field of Grecian liberty, and Eleusis, renowned for its well-known mysteries — constitute to this day objects of admiration to every intelligent traveller.

Yet even in the age of Athens' greatest glory, Plato represents Socrates characterizing the Athenians as a lazy, cowardly, talkative, and money-loving people. Their advance in literature and the sciences was conjoined with public ingratitude and private selfishness. Their "Attic wit" degenerated into unrestrained coarseness; and the philosophy which always discoursed respecting the claims of God and the relations of moral virtue left men little disposed to reverence the one, or to practise the other. Athens was, in fact, a splendid monumental structure, which covered from sight rottenness, decay and death.

Accordingly, when Paul stood in the midst of this renowned city, and beheld around him noble monuments of architecture, everywhere devoted to the grossest idolatry, it is not wonderful that "his spirit was stirred within him." Pausanias had himself said, "there was no place where so many idols were to be seen;" and Petronius, a contemporary with Paul, represents one of his characters as saying, "Our region is so full of present deities, that you can more readily find in it a god than a man." Paul not only entered the Jewish synagogues, but attended the place of public resort, the Agora, which, like the Roman Forum, was the centre of attraction both to the strangers at Athens and also to the natives, who always delighted to hear the passing news of the moment. In this place he principally encountered two sects of philosophers — the Epicureans, who, whatever were the doctrines held by their founder, maintained that the gratification of the senses was the chief good; and the Stoics, established by Zeno about eighty years previous to the apostle's day, who derived their name from the Stoa, a portico at Athens, and who declared that all human actions were under the control of an irresistible fate. Both sects, however, agreed in this, that they represented the Supreme Divinity as being far removed from human sympathies, and conceived of him rather as the

abstract reason of the universe, than as a being whom the human mind might love, and the human will genially obey. Yet, whilst these men entertained a supreme contempt for Jewish doctrines in general, and especially for the new form of doctrine of which they understood the apostle to be a teacher, their innate love of novelty rendered them extremely curious to learn what were the peculiar dogmas which it was the business of Paul to announce. They therefore led him to the top of Mars' Hill, an eminence immediately beneath the Acropolis, to the place where the Areopagus held its sittings, and demanded from him an exposition of his new system. Paul commenced his address by bearing testimony to the religious sentiment everywhere apparent in the minds of the Athenians, and declared himself to have been greatly impressed by the fact that among the altars which he had beheld he had found one dedicated "to an unknown God,"* a fact sufficiently corroborated by ancient classical authors. Availing himself of this introduction, he announced to them that the Being whom they worshipped, though in ignorance of his nature, was the God whom he came to set forth and describe. He thus ingeniously evaded the law which made it the highest offence to introduce a new divinity, and captured at once the attention of his hearers. Expatiating upon the greatness of this Supreme Ruler, according to the popular notions formed of him, he insinuated the absurdity of imagining that such a being could be shut up in temples, or could require the administration of men's hands. Then, availing himself of the poetical sentiment that men are the offspring of God, he showed how incompatible such a view was with the material notions everywhere apparent around him, and with the belief that the Divinity could be modelled or graven by the art of man. Having thus insinuated to their minds the criminality into which their ignorance had led them, he proceeded at once to the open declaration of the necessity of an immediate repentance, enforced

* See Neander's Planting of Christianity (Bohn), vol. i. p. 187.

by the fact that a day of judgment was inevitable, and that the Judge would be He whose resurrection from the dead he then and there proclaimed.

The first part of this address was heard with some respectful attention. As Paul advanced to the doctrine of the resurrection, some of his hearers, probably the Epicureans, raised a laugh, whilst others declared their wish to hear him further on the subject. But the assembly broke up with a prevailing indifference to the great truths he taught, and very few of his polished and philosophical auditors concerned themselves further with this new revelation; exhibiting thus another instance of the fact, too familiar, that the learning and intelligence of men are extremely distant from the awakened conscience and humbled mind requisite to a reception of truth. One of the judges of the Areopagetic court, however, named Dionysius,* attached himself to the apostle and to the faith he preached, together with Damaris and a few others.

Paul appears to have remained during some considerable time at Athens, from which place he sent Timothy to Thessalonica the second time, in order to offer them the consolations and succors of the gospel under persecutions.† Leaving Athens, he proceeded to Corinth. Here he found a Jew and Jewess, Aquila and Priscilla, who had been banished from Rome by a recent decree of Claudius. The apostle attached himself to them,

* This Dionysius has been the subject of many Roman Catholic legends. Eusebius relates concerning him, on the authority of another Dionysius, that he was the first bishop of the church at Athens, which is credible. It is, moreover, related of him, on insufficient testimony, that he was burnt alive at Athens for the Christian faith, under the most cruel torments. Several works are attributed to him, confessed even by the best Catholic writers to be spurious, and of a later date. The Romish church believes that the head of this saint was removed to the cathedral of Soissons, and his body to that of St. Denis. Some writers have confounded this apostolical Christian with the first Bishop of Paris.

† See Neander's History of the Planting of Christianity, vol. i. p. 195, for the reasons which justify this supposition.

pursuing his trade of tent-maker with Aquila, who had followed the same occupation, and employing his Sabbaths in discourses concerning the gospel of Christ. Among his converts we find the names of Epenetus, Stephanas, Crispus, and Gaius. Whilst Paul was at Corinth, Silas and Timotheus returned to him, and, in consequence of the news they brought him, he wrote his first epistle to the church at Thessalonica — the earliest, probably, of the apostolical letters. The want of success which the apostle experienced at Athens appears to have greatly depressed his spirits, and to have led him to the deep conviction of the obstacles which human wisdom presented to the reception of the faith of Christ. He tells the Corinthians that he came to them in the simple confidence that spiritual aid alone could render his ministrations availing. Rejected at Corinth, as usual, by the Jews, he changed his residence, and, after having been strengthened by divine visitation, preached with much success to the Gentiles, though his converts were mainly poor and humble. These were formed by the apostle into a regular society. After Paul had resided a year and a half at Corinth, the appointment of Gallio, brother of Seneca the philosopher, to the proconsulship of Achaia, stimulated the Jews to bring Paul before his tribunal, charged with the crime of setting up an illegal worship. The proceeding threatened serious consequences, which, however, were averted by the mildness and caution with which the Roman officer acted in this emergency. He declared that if Paul's offence had been that he violated the rights of the subject he would listen to the preferred accusation, but that he at once refused to enter into the merits of a dispute involving a logomachy in which he felt no interest. Protected by such a decision, the apostle continued to labor with much success.

Before Paul left Corinth, where he appears to have resided, on the whole, two years, he wrote a second epistle to the Thessalonians. Then, taking leave of the Corinthians, and accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila as far as Ephesus, he came by way of Cenchrea, Ephesus, and Cesarea and Jerusalem, whither

he was called, to execute a Nazarite vow, once more to Antioch. This concluded Paul's second missionary journey, — a journey fraught with many most delightful and cheering indications of the divine spirit and of the power of the truth.

After the apostle's arrival at Antioch, the occurrences took place which are related in the second chapter of the epistle to the Galatians (verse 11). The decisions of the apostles, and of the church at Jerusalem, though for the time being they allayed the threatened storm, could not allay every remain of irritated feeling which influenced the Jews towards the Gentiles. Certain members of the church at Jerusalem had come down to Antioch, and had exercised a deleterious influence even over the mind of the apostle Peter, then a visitor in that town. Liable as he always had been to be led away by strong impulses which made him occasionally forget himself, he exhibited in this crisis some repetition of his former fickleness. He had heartily acknowledged, since the decision of the conference at Jerusalem, the Gentiles as brethren partaking equal rights with the Jewish converts. Yet in the presence of the brethren from Jerusalem he had pusillanimously resiled from this position, and had declined to eat with the Gentiles. And the hesitation infected Barnabas himself. The righteous indignation of Paul was aroused by this time-serving "dissimulation," as he did not fail to designate it, and, with a boldness and warmth fully justified by the occasion, he "reproved Peter to his face," so little notion had he of the claim of infallibility and supremacy since asserted on behalf of that apostle of the Lord. His remonstrances proved successful with the principal persons concerned. But the leaven of the Jewish prejudice long remained to pervert the minds of the young converts from the Hebrew religion.* From this time Judaizing teachers became the pests of the church.

After remaining for some time at Antioch, Paul resolved to

* See Neander's Planting of Christianity, vol. i. p. 213.

visit the churches of Galatia and Phrygia, thus commencing his third great journey. In prosecuting these labors he came to Ephesus. Before his arrival, an Alexandrian Jew, named Apollos, who, as a rhetorician well acquainted with the Jewish scriptures, knew no more of Christ than he had learned from John the Baptist, had come to Ephesus. Aquila and Priscilla, having become acquainted with this man, instructed him in the doctrines of the gospel, and then sent him to Achaia, where he proved a powerful preacher of the truth, and, according to Jerome, was chosen Bishop of Corinth. On Paul's arrival at Ephesus he found the disciples of this man, who, though partially instructed by their teacher in the doctrines of John, had not yet learned the peculiar features of the Christian system. By the apostle's preaching they made a further advance in the faith, and were baptized into the profession of Christianity. During the period of his successful residence in Ephesus, Paul wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians, having learned from Stephanus, Fortunatus and Achaicus, the position of matters in that church.

From Ephesus, Paul proceeded to Macedonia, where he wrote his second letter to the Corinthians, and then visited Corinth, whence he addressed his epistle to the Romans. He returned by way of Miletus to Jerusalem. The occurrences of this journey will be more appropriately noticed in some of our succeeding chapters.

It remains for us to observe the form of the constitution of the church at this important — this divine — period of its history. It is sufficiently clear that the synagogue-worship of the Jews furnished the leading notion, according to which, under the Spirit's direction, the early church was modelled. For not only is that name retained in the Christian epistles,* but the designation of the church officers of the primitive period is manifestly adopted from Jewish customs long familiar to the apostles

* James 2 : 2. Heb. 10 : 25.

and their converts. Thus it was possible for many of them to become Christians, though they had not ceased, as to exterior forms, to be Jews.

"It appears highly probable, — I might say morally certain, — that wherever a Jewish synagogue existed that was brought — the whole or chief part of it — to embrace the gospel, the apostles did not there so much form a Christian church (or congregation, *ecclesia*) as make an existing congregation Christian, by introducing the Christian sacrament and worship, and establishing whatever regulations were requisite for the newly-appointed faith; leaving the machinery (if I may so speak) of government unchanged; the rulers of synagogues, elders, and other officers (whether spiritual or ecclesiastical, or both), being already provided in the existing institutions. And it is likely that several of the earliest Christian churches did originate in this way; that is, they were *converted synagogues*, which became churches as soon as the members, or the main part of the members, acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah.

"The attempt to effect this conversion of a Jewish synagogue into a Christian church seems always to have been made, in the first instance, in every place where there was an opening for it. Even after the call of the idolatrous Gentiles, it appears plainly to have been the practice of the apostles Paul and Barnabas, when they came to any city in which there was a synagogue, to go thither first and deliver their sacred message to the Jews, and devout or proselyte Gentiles; according to their own expression (Acts 13 : 17), to the men of Israel and those *that feared* God, adding that 'it was necessary that the word of God should first be preached to them!' And when they founded a church in any of those cities in which (and such were, probably, a very large majority) there was no Jewish synagogue that received the gospel, it is likely they would still conform in a great measure to the same model." *

* Whately's Kingdom of Christ, pp. 85, 86.

That each Christian church was, in the earliest period of ecclesiastical history, individualized and unassociated, except by the religious feeling which alike pervaded all, is admitted by the most candid historians. "Neither in the New Testament," says Mosheim, "nor in any ancient document whatever, do we find anything recorded from whence it might be inferred that any of the minor churches were at all dependent on, or looked up for direction to, those of greater magnitude or consequence. On the contrary, several things occur therein which put it out of all doubt that every one of them enjoyed the same rights, and was considered as being on a footing of the most perfect equality with the rest. Indeed it cannot, I will not say be proved, but even be made to appear probable, from testimony human or divine, that in this age it was the practice for several churches to enter into and maintain among themselves the sort of association which afterwards came to subsist among the churches of almost every province. I allude to their assembling by their bishops, at stated periods, for the purpose of enacting general laws, and determining any questions or controversies that might arise respecting divine matters. It is not until the second century that any traces of that sort of association from whence councils took their origin are to be perceived; when we find them occurring here and there, some of them tolerably clear and distinct, others again but slight and faint, which seems plainly to prove that the practice arose subsequently to the times of the apostles, and that all that is urged concerning the councils of the first century, and the divine authority of councils, is sustained merely by the most uncertain kind of support, namely, the practice and opinion of more recent times." *

The whole body of spiritual believers constituted, according to the notions of the primitive church, a priesthood; each individual believer being a priest, who, without the need of con-

* De Rebus Christ. Sæc. i. 48.

secrated places, or the intervention of consecrated persons, was competent to "offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Yet, as the order and action of the churches imperatively demanded some forms of organization, and at least a suggestive control, the power which resided in each church at large was directed and applied by those whose spiritual gifts and eminence specially qualified them for such a distinction. Whilst the Christian church was in its infancy, extraordinary officers were raised up, and qualified by the Head of the church, not to preside over any individual community, but to impel and to superintend the action of the whole. These were *apostles*, designated by the personal appointment of the Lord Jesus himself, and who, in their more solemn utterances, were the organs of communicating infallible truth, and who not only possessed in common with others miraculous gifts, but the power of conveying those gifts to others. Subordinate to these, and largely sharing in miraculous charisms, especially in the gift of speaking with tongues, were the evangelists, who accompanied and aided the apostles in their purely missionary operations, and were often intrusted by them with powers to constitute distinct religious societies. Subsidiary, also, to the apostles, were prophets, invested with declarative powers of a supernatural order, and being spiritual interpreters for the benefit of the whole church.

But, besides these extraordinary officers, each church possessed the power, under the advice and admonition of the apostles, of electing distinct officers for the arrangement of its peculiar concerns. These were presbyters (as they were designated, by the application of a term in use by the Jewish synagogues), or bishops (as they were called at a somewhat later period, by a phrase familiar to Gentile usages). The terms are obviously interchangeable, the former referring to the character which fitted them for the office, the latter to the relations of the office itself.

"At first, indeed, and for some time, church-governors were only of two ranks, presbyters and deacons. At least, this

appears to have been the case in particular instances, as at Philippi and at Ephesus; and the term bishop was confounded with that of presbyter." *

"If the ancient church is no priest, or sacerdotal church, the canon law of the Latin church (being simply the law of an absolutely governing corporation of priests, called the hierarchy, and being based not only upon mistakes and all sorts of metastatic misunderstandings, but upon forgeries and impositions) must fall to the ground with any hierarchical system based upon that foundation. And if so, what is the philosopher of church history to say of churches in which the Christian people, that is to say, all the non-clerical members of any congregation, have, as such, no right to take part in the nomination of their pastors?" †

"The bishops and presbyters; — two appellations which, in their first origin, appear to have distinguished the same office, and the same order of persons." ‡

But, that the church might have its temporal affairs well regulated by Christian men chosen with a view to the administration of its more secular matters, another order of officers belonged to each individual society, called deacons, to whom was specially intrusted the care of the poor, and, in course of time, by a natural though not inevitable arrangement, the ordering of its general temporalities. Both the elders and the deacons appear to have been subdivided into many varieties, as the exigences of each peculiar body might demand; and when, in process of time, the organizations of churches caused the extraordinary offices to cease and determine, these two remained, — the only church governors for whose permanent appointment inspired instructions were given. Thus, by an arrangement at once simple and sufficient, provision was made for the unchecked

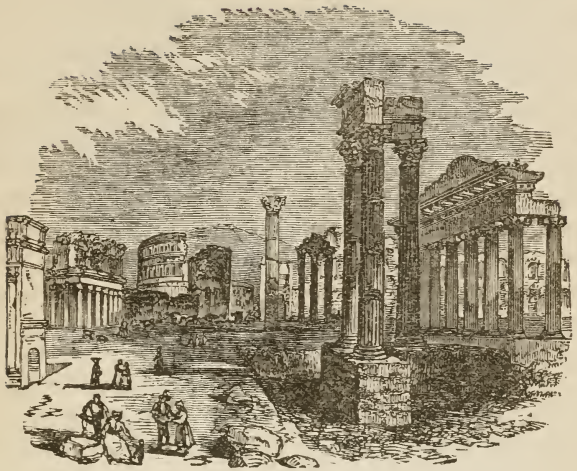
* Milner's Church History, vol. i. p. 161.

† Bunsen's Hippolytus, vol. ii. p. 109.

‡ Gibbon's Decline and Fall, chap. xiii.

yet orderly development of the operation of the life-giving Spirit; whilst the intercourse of the church with its Head was constant and uninterrupted, and the individuality of no member checked in its operation. "Such were the principles on which the affairs of the churches were conducted for some time, and none can be conceived more favorable to the progress of the faith. The government of a single person protected each society from internal dissensions; the electiveness of that governor rendered probable his merit; the meeting together of the deputies of the churches in occasional assemblies on equal terms taught the scattered members of the faith that they were animated by one soul, and informed and dignified by one Spirit."*

* Waddington's Church History, Part 1, chap, ii.



THE FORUM AT ROME.

## CHAPTER II.

### ROME AND ITS EARLY CHRISTIANITY.

The course of our narrative requires that we now transport the reader to Rome, at this period the magnificent metropolis of an empire which had purchased an unequalled power at the price of the liberties of the whole civilized world; whilst its dominions extended from the Western or the Atlantic Ocean, over three thousand miles, to the river Euphrates, and, with its base upon the Atlas Mountains in Africa, formed an irregular pyramid, the apex of which rose into Britain itself. The metropolis had, by the changes it had undergone during the reign of Augustus, fully justified that emperor's boast, that he had found Rome brick, and left it marble; and though these alterations were much surpassed by succeeding ones, they, at that

period, exceeded all precedent. The circumference of the city was about thirteen miles, and beyond the ancient walls which Servius Tullius had placed around it there was gathering an enormous mass of new structures, — temples, baths, aqueducts, theatres, — in short, all that belonged to a polite and effeminate people; whilst still beyond these the dwellings of the rich stood in the midst of gardens situated between the public roads. The Palatine Hill, on which Romulus had first built the mud and straw thatched cottages he called a city, and designated by his own name, was still the centre of the buildings collected together during eight hundred years, and at the base of its eminence stood the Forum, at that time surrounded by temples and public edifices; though they differed greatly from the more majestic buildings of the next age, some ruins of which yet survive. On one side of this mass flowed the yellow and muddy Tiber, dividing the Janicular and Vatican Mountains from the other eminences of Rome, and terminating the ancient city in that direction. Whatever the architectural honors heaped by Augustus upon Rome, its ordinary houses were extremely inconvenient, though of inordinate height; its streets were narrow and confined; and though the public roads in the immediate adjacency of the city constituted one of its wonders, the traveller was exposed to a thousand inconveniences of which modern times are happily ignorant. Yet the magnificence of Rome was such as to draw applause even from those most wedded to their own national glory. Strabo, who flourished in the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, and who, as a Greek, was acquainted with the best specimens of architecture, having, moreover, travelled over a large portion of the Old World, describes the appearance of the city as surpassingly glorious, exceeding expectation, and distancing all human competition.

At the period of which we write, the eyes of the civilized world were turned towards this metropolis, as the face of the Mahometan worshipper seeks his kebla. One mighty in-

fluence spread itself over all nations, brooding over them like a gigantic spectre, which took the guise sometimes of an angel of light, sometimes of a demon of darkness. The Spartan liberty for which Rome had been once distinguished had altogether vanished, except in a few obsolete formulas, such as the names of the senate and the consulship. The emperor held all offices in his own person, and was, in the language of the times, Divine. A splendid despotism bound almost the whole world in its gilded chains; the only other empire of any note being the Parthian, beyond the Euphrates. Poetico-political imagination never conceived of a more distinguished uniformity. The name of Rome resounded from the pillars of Hercules; its legions occupied northern Gaul; its deeds of arms and glory spread themselves to Dacia and the utmost Thrace; and the cities which successively arose in Asia Minor and the East were not only monuments of the imperial resources by which many of them had been erected, but were imitations, on a smaller scale, of the capital itself. The kings and princes, the proconsuls and prefects, the centurions and soldiers, scattered over that enormous empire, reflected the imperial authority to the distant nations. The Greek language became increasingly general through the more polished parts of the empire. But the power of the impulse necessary to circulate blood through so vast a system was exhaustive. Rome diffused science, learning, arts, commerce; it also diffused venality, profligacy, corruption, and the elements of political and social suicide. It performed the office of a bully on the largest scale: at its caprice it could tread down; when provoked it could annihilate. But its very power united all nations against itself, and every blow that it dealt upon its crouching foes brought it nearer to its own destruction.

The moral state of this overgrown population of a hundred and twenty millions exhibited a chaos of vices. When the world had been separated into independent states, the struggles they maintained for liberty tended to create and foster many of

the social virtues. But as Rome became the mistress of the world, and as the individualism of nations was lost, the beneficial results of such a stimulating influence perished. The mind which is ever thought for, and never asserts itself, soon becomes, whether in individuals or in communities, incapable of all that is powerful or good. Religion, when left to flow along its own natural channels, and at its own proper rate, tends to defecate itself and to become pure. Force it into rapidity, it becomes turbid; shut it up from motion, it is a stagnant pool. Such was the case with Rome; and, in speaking of it, we describe the condition of the mass of its empire. Never pure at its source, the political system grew worse as it grew older, and became the powerful instrument of corrupting the whole people. It not only gave no elevated views of the Divine character, such as might purify and exalt the moral feelings, but it deified baseness, fraud, injustice, cruelty, and lust. The observances of the pagan temples, as related by Herodotus, Aristophanes, Josephus, Strabo, Athenæus, and others,* greatly contributed to this moral desolation. The progress of the doctrines of the Epicureans, though not of Epicurus himself, led directly to the same result, and are quoted by Montesquieu as among the principal causes which hastened the decline of the Roman power.† Among the Eastern nations, polygamy was extensively practised; among the Western, divorces were frequent, almost regular. The marriage tie fell into contempt, or was used in conjunction with vices the very name of which is infamous. Fornication was allowed even by the sages of the people. The notions of the multitude respecting religion were altogether gross and sensuous, whilst the priests were frequently atheists, and the philosophers, in the very act of practising the popular worship, despised and derided it in their hearts. What other results could, indeed, follow from the withering ridicule which such writers as Lucian poured upon the divinities of the highest

* The specifications may be as well avoided.

† Montesquieu sur le grandeur des Romains, chap. 10.

repute? The learned had knowledge in advance of the people, but they believed what they did not avow, and avowed what they did not believe. With bitter reproach, Tertullian accused the heathens of his day with having restored the impure practices of the Bacchanalian and other revels,* and with openly practising that for the mere suspicion of which Christians were so barbarously condemned. Nor were these idolatrous forms senseless and immoral only, but also cruel. Even human sacrifices were by no means rare. Augustus caused three hundred men (some say four hundred) to be put to death at the altar of Cæsar.† In the temple of Jupiter Latialis, at Rome, a human victim was daily sacrificed.‡ Sextus Pompeius sacrificed to Neptune by drowning men in the sea.§ Boys were also put to death in the reign of Augustus, in connection with magical incantations.

No part of the Roman system was more abominable than its treatment of slaves. The master possessed so absolute a power over his bond-servants, that he might scourge them or put them to death at pleasure. When a master was found slain without apparent cause, all his slaves were liable to crucifixion. Claudius passed a law forbidding the putting to death or the abandonment of diseased slaves.

The degeneracy of the age is declared by Horace in a thousand places, in none more remarkable than in Book iii. ode 6:

> "Damnosa quid non imminuit dies?
> Ætas parentum pejor avis tulit
> Nos nequiores, mox daturos
> Progeniem vitiosiorem."

> "More vicious than their fathers' age,
> Our sires begot the present race
> Of manners, impious, bold and base;
> And yet, with crimes to us unknown,
> Our sons shall mark the coming of their own."—FRANCIS.

* Tertull. Apologet. vi.; Livy, xxxix. 8.
† Suet. Oct. c. xv. ‡ Lactantius, Div. Inst. 1, c. xxi.
§ Dio Cassius, quoted (as are the foregoing) by Gieseler, Introduction.

Thus does Seneca express himself in the age of Nero :

" Nec furtiva jam scelera sunt, præter oculos eunt ; adeoque in publicum missa nequitia est, et in omnium pectoribus, evaluit, ut innocentia non rara sed nulla est. — De Ira.

" Wickedness is no longer secret ; it is before our eyes ; it has become so public, and exerts such power over all breasts, that innocence is not only rare, but non-existent."

To the same effect writes Juvenal, a little later, in the age of Domitian :

" Nihil est ulterius, quod nostris moribus addet
Posteritas * * *
Omne in præcipiti vitium stetit." *

" Nothing is left, nothing for future times
To add to the full catalogue of crimes ;
The baffled sons must feel the same desires
And act the same mad follies as their sires.
Vice has attained its zenith." — Gifford.

The throne of imperial Rome was at this time occupied by one whose name has passed into a proverb of licentiousness and flagitiousness. During the first years of Nero's reign, whatever the turpitudes in which he privately indulged, the wise counsels of Burrhus and Seneca (who had aided Agrippina to place her son upon the throne in place of the elder son of Claudius) prevented the outbreak of those enormities by which his reign was afterwards disgraced. At this time there was brought to Rome, as a prisoner, one little distinguished among those whom the movements of a great empire were continually directing towards the metropolitan city, but hereafter to be distinguished by a name and a fame as imperishable as noble and holy, — the apostle Paul.

Paul's last journey to Jerusalem appears to have been dictated by two objects : one was, that he might convey thither a large contribution which had been made among the Gentiles of the East for the poor Christians of the Holy City ; and another,

* Juvenal, Sat. I.

that he might defend himself against the charges of his Judaizing opponents, and heal, by his presence, the wounds which had been made in the church's unity. Accordingly, he departed from Corinth about the time of the Jewish Passover, designing to arrive at Jerusalem by the Pentecost. Having reached Miletus, he sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church, to whom he delivered an address deeply prophetic of his own approaching calamities, but imbued with a spirit of dignified earnestness, integrity and tenderness, such as must render it for all time a forcible memorial of the principles and duties belonging to all Christian pastors. The effect upon his hearers was commensurate with the importance of the occasion. Weeping and embracing him, they accompanied him to his ship with a farewell, never to be repeated more.

On his way to Jerusalem, Paul received more than one warning from disciples possessing the prophetical spirit, calculated to deter him from his intended journey. But the steady resolution of the apostle's mind bore him forward unmoved. To go to Jerusalem was duty, and before that duty inferior considerations of safety and ease became things of naught. In this temper Paul reached Jerusalem, where he was joyfully received by the believers, and, on the day following, met the elders of the church at the house of James. To them he recited his successful ministry among the Gentiles. The joy with which this intelligence was received was, however, damped by the remembrance of the strong prejudices which the Judaizing teachers had infused against Paul into the minds of the more rigid among the church. James told him that a notion was current among them that he had exhorted the Jews to forsake the Mosaic ritual, and to abandon circumcision. The charge was not without a show of probability, inasmuch as Paul in his preachings and writings had always magnified the spirit of an internal life above the letter of an external law. But the course of his life evidently shows that he was not yet prepared to renounce the forms of Judaism in the case of those born Jews; and, indeed,

the time was yet to come when the providence of God was to proclaim, in the most striking and visible manner, that the whole platform of Jewish observances was abolished. James, therefore, advised him to unite himself with other Jewish Christians in the observance of a Nazaritic vow. To this course Paul consented; but before the time of this observance was complete, the Jews of the city, whose bigotry was already aroused by the history and proceedings of the apostle, stirred up the inhabitants of Jerusalem, seized Paul in the Temple, and accused him of preaching the abrogation of the law of Moses, and of defiling the Temple by introducing a Gentile within its precincts. The ground of the latter accusation simply was, that Paul had been seen in the city in company with Trophimus, an Ephesian. A crowd was collected; a tumult ensued; and Paul would assuredly have been destroyed, had not the Jewish tribune, with centurions and soldiers, rescued him from the hands of the infuriated mob. By these soldiers he was carried into the Antonia, followed by the multitude, but was permitted to speak to the people from the stairs of the citadel. He accordingly related the remarkable circumstances of his conversion to the Christian faith, and of the commission which had been given to him to preach Christ's gospel to the Gentiles. At this point the indignation of the mob became outrageous, and was shown by every demonstration of insane excitement. The tribune commanded that Paul should be scourged, partly that he might derive from him a confession of the real facts of the case, and partly that he might appease the multitude by torturing their victim. But, as the prisoner pleaded the rights of a Roman citizen, it was resolved that the Jewish council should be summoned on the morrow, and that Paul should be brought before their tribunal.

Thus arraigned, on the next day the prisoner began by declaring before the Sanhedrim his unconsciousness of all duplicity (for with this he had been directly charged) during his whole life. On hearing this declaration, the High Priest commanded him to be struck on the mouth, as a liar and blasphemer. The

action aroused the prisoner, who, in words of sarcasm, though of truth, reproved Ananias eagerly for the injustice. He was immediately and sternly called to order for such an answer to the High Priest. Without delay, Paul recalled the phrase, stating that he had spoken in inconsideration of the office which Ananias held.* He then, with a view of enlisting on his side, as far as was honestly possible, the religious opinions of at least part of his judges, proceeded to say, with entire truth, that he was a Pharisee, and that one of the tenets of the Pharisees, namely, the resurrection, was that for which he was a victim. There needed nothing more than this to divide the assembly, which ended in an altercation again threatening Paul's life. Once more the military power intervened for his rescue; and at length Paul was sent to Cesarea, to the procurator Felix, whose dominion comprehended Tarsus, Paul's native place. With the want of principle apparent in men of his class, and in his day, Felix vacillated between his sense of justice on the one hand, and considerations of interest on the other; he believed in Paul's innocence of any real charge, but he hoped to receive a bribe for his release. Failing in this, as he perceived the apostle's imprisonment to be a popular measure, he kept him in confinement till he was superseded in his office by M. P. Festus.

Immediately after his appointment, Festus, having been informed of the charges laid against Paul, resolved not to bring him to Jerusalem, as the Jews desired (intending to assassinate him on the road), but to confront him with his accusers at Cesarea; and, though evidently contrary to his convictions, he endeavored to induce the apostle to submit his cause for trial at Jerusalem. Paul rejected the overture, appealing, as a Roman citizen had a right to do, to the tribunal of the Roman emperor himself. Rejoicing in this opportunity of freeing himself of so troublesome a case, Festus granted the appeal. But as the young King Agrippa II. arrived about this time at

* See Neander. The other interpretation, that Ananias was not properly the High Priest, seems far-fetched and improbable.

Cesarea, Festus summoned his prisoner to plead his cause in their united presence. The trial was instituted with much pomp and circumstance. Again Paul related the history of his conversion, urging upon Agrippa himself, as a Jew well read in the ancient prophets, to receive Jesus as the promised Messiah of the people of God. As he pressed the important facts of Christianity close upon the conscience of the monarch, Agrippa's resolution wavered — the citadel of the understanding was almost gained! But the influence of the heart prevailed, and, after an instant's pause, the garrison remained untaken. Yet such was Agrippa's conviction of the apostle's innocence, that Paul would have been released, but for his appeal to Cæsar. That appeal demanded that he should be sent with an escort to Rome, though he was despatched with a report calculated to produce an impression in his favor. He was regarded, probably, rather as a general disturber of the public peace, in consequence of the alleged anti-Jewish doctrines he held, than as one guilty of any specific crime against the Roman government.

Paul had, apparently, been committed to the charge of Burrhus himself, who then held the post of prætorian prefect, and, except that he was in military custody, and was therefore attached by a long chain to a guard, who was regularly relieved at his watch, was in comparative liberty, and was allowed to occupy a house hired by himself. His time was mainly devoted to the care of the churches, with whom he carried on an extensive correspondence. Nor did he fail, during the two years in which he thus remained a prisoner, to preach the doctrine of his Lord, and to stimulate the Roman Christians to exemplify and extend its truths.* During this confinement he addressed letters to Philippi, to Colosse, and to Ephesus.†

From the testimony of Clement of Rome, who informs us that Paul's martyrdom occurred after he had visited the West, combined with the apostle's intention of visiting Spain, expressed in his letter to the Romans, we are led to the conclusion that

* Acts 27 : 30, 31. † Neander.

his confinement was comparatively brief, and that he was liberated from it about A. D. 63, when he resumed his apostolical labors, and visited various regions, and, among others, some of the Western churches. During these journeys he probably sent his first letter to Timothy, and his epistle to Titus.

At this time events took place at Rome which greatly compromised the position of the early Christians. In the first instance, the tolerance of the Roman government had extended itself to the followers of Jesus, though that tolerance was built upon no very solid foundation.* It was, in fact, rather negative than positive, though Eusebius tells us, after Tertullian, that when Pilate transmitted to Tiberius an account of the life and actions of Christ, that emperor was desirous of having Jesus ranked among the gods, but that his purpose was frustrated by the non-compliance of the senate.

Though the integrity, purity, and charity of the primitive believers, were calculated to attract the veneration of all who could appreciate such virtues, there was at the same time a combination of causes which rendered the Christians extremely unpopular. Not only did the heathens see their idolatrous religion repudiated by many who had been its former devotees, but the gross and licentious habits, favored by the worship and the mythological history of their deities, could not bear the light of that high-toned virtue which preached simplicity, meekness, temperance and charity, as essential graces. The difference between the systems marked itself in every act of public or private life. The worship of the emperor; the sacrifices offered for his safety;† the libation at the meal; the furniture of the apartment; the interjection at the ordinary conversation; the observances at the marriage feast or at the bier of death; the names inscribed on the calendar; the inscriptions on the

* For Cicero tells us (de Leg. ii. c. 8) that the introduction of new gods was forbidden by the Roman code; and Valerius Maximus (i. 3) cites three instances in which foreign creeds were prohibited.

† Tertull. Apol. c. xxxiii.

coins; the incense dropped by every Roman senator on the altar, before performing his legislative functions; — all furnished occasions on which the Christians might, and doubtless did, express the difference of their views from those current around them. These things would appear to some simply absurd, while they were grave offences to others.* The military spirit of the Roman people was disgusted by the tone in which the Christians proclaimed that their religion was one, not of wanton aggrandizement, but of peace. The jealous ruler was alarmed by the tone in which they spoke of a kingdom of their own: whilst the morbid greediness of the citizens for public spectacles was offended by the remonstrances with which the followers of Jesus inveighed against the immorality, or reprobated the cruelties, of such exhibitions. Nor did malice fail to add its fictions to the statements of actual facts. "We are called most infamous," writes Tertullian, a little later, but recapitulating facts which began at this period to obtain currency, "on the ground of our sacrament of murdering children, and after that our banquet" (on the murdered victim), "and after such banquet our incest, which dogs, the overturners of the lights" (trained, it might be supposed), "effect through the shamelessness of darkness and impious desires."† But such charges were evidently the mere inventions of wickedness. The darkness of vicious indulgence beholds with irritation the light of truth. In fact, it was the purity of the Christian religion which gave rise to such rumors. And when the elevated doctrines of an all-purifying religion were propounded in the name of a crucified malefactor, Roman indignation reached its summit!

* The Emperor Julian, as represented by Gregory of Nazianzen, derides the Christians because they assembled with boys and infirm old women, and mortified their bodies by watchings and fastings. Orat. 2.

† Tertullian, lib. Apolog. c. vii. The Christians seem to have been charged with those practices of the Bacchanals which were prohibited in Rome. Livy relates the circumstance at large.

It must, however, be acknowledged, that the nightly meetings of the Christians could scarcely fail of attracting attention from a government so absolute, and therefore so suspicious, as the Roman at this period. Nor was the low origin of the early Christians without its influence. *Οὐ πολλοὶ εὐγενεῖς*, "not many well born" — as Paul says; and Theodoret, speaking of the early believers, says that "they were neither rich nor learned, but workers in brass, builders, household slaves, laborers, tree-fellers, and women." * And Minucius Felix adds: "They despise the honors and purple of priests, though themselves are half naked." †

Such were the feelings with which the great mass of the inhabitants of the great city — comprehending, as the mass always did, a large infusion of those whom business and pleasure had brought from every part of the empire — regarded the system of Christianity.

About the year 60, Nero had fully developed the features of his hideous character. The absolutism of the Roman emperors, which left their subjects no resource except that of ridding themselves of their tyrants, was usually the hot-bed of crimes. Nero threw off shame, and he had at no time virtue. His brother and his wife perished at his word. Burrhus was no more, either in consequence of death or treachery; and Seneca retired in disgust from court. The emperor gave full scope to his career of impurity, profligacy, cruelty, and buffoonery.

At this time, when Nero was exhausting the imperial treasures by his incredible vices, a great conflagration took place in Rome, which destroyed so considerable part of the city, as that only three divisions out of fourteen remained entire. Tacitus hesitates to assert that this event took place by order of the emperor.‡ But Suetonius is much less scrupulous, and does not hesitate to affix on him the crime of the transaction, declaring

* Serm. viii. † Minuc. Felic. Octavius.
‡ Tacit. Annal. lib. xv. c. 38. Suet. Nero.

that Nero's pretext was, that he might remove the narrow and winding streets for which, since the burning of Rome by the Gauls, the old city had been remarkable.* The fire began in that part of the Circus which was contiguous to the Palatine and Cœlian Hills, where the fire readily seized the inflammable materials sold in the booths. At last it spread over those portions of the city which were crowded by the multitude, carrying desolation and destruction in its way. During six days the conflagration raged with the utmost fury, bidding defiance to all efforts to check it, and driving the miserable and helpless people into the fields for shelter. Suspicions fixed themselves on the emperor as the cause of this terrible calamity. It was reported that when one had repeated before him the line, "When I am dead let the earth be destroyed by fire," he had said, "Yes, indeed; but let it be whilst I am living." It was declared also that he had been seen during the progress of the flames on the summit of his palace, dressed in the theatrical costumes of which he was so inordinately fond, and singing a song commemorative of the destruction of Troy: and it is certain that he afterwards appropriated a large portion of the ruined city, to the injury of thousands, as the site of a palace called the Golden palace, which he had long greatly desired to build.† Such is the price which a nation may pay for absolute and arbitrary power! To evade the popular fury which his combined acts of reckless tyranny ending with this last scene had drawn upon him, Nero endeavored to fix the odium of the burning of the city on the Christians, already sufficiently detested. Dean Milman is of opinion that the early believers, supposing the

* Tacitus describes the conflagration in his own characteristic and powerful style. Lib. xv. c. 38, 39, 40.

† The magnificence of this palace was almost incredible. Gold, silver, and precious stones, were profusely lavished on its adornments, and the most finished specimens of Grecian statuary adorned it. Its gardens were of prodigious size, adorned with numerous lakes, one of which, drained for the purpose, is now occupied by the Colosseum. Out of the ruins of this Golden palace, and on its site, Titus afterwards built his baths and palace.

conflagration to be one of the indications of the coming of Christ to judge the world and to avenge himself of his enemies, expressed themselves regarding the event in such a manner as to expose themselves to this popular suspicion. But the supposition, though ingenious, appears to have no solid grounds. According to the testimony of Tacitus, the first Christians who were seized confessed their crime.* But let us extract the passage:

"Therefore, in order to put an end to the rumor, Nero brought forward, as accused persons to be subjected to the most exquisite punishments, those who were commonly called Christians, men hateful for their wickedness. The author of their name, Christ, was capitally punished by the Procurator, Pontius Pilate, whilst Tiberius was emperor. The detestable superstition, however, though for the present suppressed, again broke out, not merely through Jerusalem, the origin of the evil, but in the city itself, where all kinds of atrocious and shameful practices concentrate themselves and are celebrated. Therefore, a few having been first taken who made confession,† their aid brought to light a great multitude, who were convicted, not so much of the crime of burning the city, as of hatred of the human race."

An exterminating war now began upon the Christians, which, though mainly confined to Rome, exercised, doubtless, no small

* The enmity which Tacitus everywhere bears to all who bore the Christian name is characteristic. It is probably this feeling alone which has induced him to hesitate respecting Nero's part in the conflagration. This malice must be borne in mind as affecting his account of the whole transaction.

† Though the language of Tacitus is capable of the construction that these persons who were first apprehended confessed, not the crime, but the fact of their associates being Christians, the language used by Tertullian renders it probable that Tacitus was understood as having asserted that these Christians pleaded guilty to the incendiarism: — "At enim idem Cornelius Tacitus, sane ille mendaciorum loquacissimus," — "that most fluent liar."

influence on the other provinces of the empire. The utmost ingenuity was shown in the manner of torturing these suspected criminals. Some, covered with the skins of wild beasts, were exposed to be hunted by dogs; some were crucified, in horrible mockery of him whose name they bore; whilst others, covered over with inflammable materials, were set on fire to give light by night to the imperial gardens,* then standing on the site of the present St. Peter's. Terrified by the atrocities committed by this imperial slave to his own wickedness and caprices, the Christians were extremely slow to believe in the death of Nero when that event took place — it was too good to be true; and a notion prevailed that, though apparently dead, Nero would reäppear as Antichrist to direct the world's final persecution, after which the consummation of all things would take place.

This persecution appears to have involved the two principal apostles of our Lord, Peter and Paul, though their death was preceded by that of James, the brother of the Lord, as we shall relate in the next chapter. Let us now speak of Peter. After the deliberations respecting circumcision which took place at Jerusalem, he seems to have removed from that city, and the further accounts we possess concerning him are mainly vague and uncertain. It appears, however, that he visited, and doubtless preached at Antioch; † and it is inferable from his first epistle, which is addressed to the Hebrew Christians scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia (Minor) and Bithynia, that he had been acquainted with those quarters in the course of his apostolical labors, an acquaintance which might be gained by means of the settlement at Antioch, ascribed to him by Christian antiquity.‡ He afterwards settled in Par-

* To this cruelty Juvenal, Sat. I., may refer.

"——— tædâ lucebis in illâ
Quâ stantes ardent, qui fixo gutture fumant."

† Gal. 2 : 11. ‡ See Hieron., in Gal. c. xi.; Euseb., in Catal.

thia, in which place he appears to have written his first, if not also his second epistle.* The fact that Peter resided in Rome is derived from sources most authentic. Eusebius brings testimony on this subject too distinct to leave the matter doubtful. He states that Peter was brought to Rome by the providence of God to countervail the heretical schemes of Simon Magus;† this statement is confirmed by the recently discovered work of Hippolytus.

After the meeting between Simon and Peter at Samaria, Simon had allied himself with Helen, a woman of infamous reputation, whom Tertullian tells us he purchased with the money he had offered to Peter for the gifts of the Holy Spirit.‡ He declared this woman to be the "Great Thought," as himself was the "Great Mind." The system of Simon was expounded in "the Great Declaration,"§ a work developing his system, though not so much ascribed to Simon himself as to his followers. To exhibit the system as it afterwards took shape is neither edifying nor necessary. Suffice it to say that in its course the Divine Essence, which was the source of all things, and which is designated "He who stands, has stood, and will stand," gave being, as residing in man, to three pairs of developments or œons, *mind* and *thought*, below which were again *voice* and *name*, and inferior to which once more were *reasoning* and *reflection*. But, as these three pairs of œons were rather potential than actual, they became in action three other pairs in correspondence with them; the Divine Essence, answering to the primal fire of Heraclitus; *heaven* and *earth*, *sun* and *moon*, *air* and *water*, being the further manifestations.‖

* Chrys. Hom. vi. in Luc. † Euseb., B. II. c. xiv.

‡ De Animâ, quæst. 13.

§ *ἡ ἀπόφασις μεγάλη*. See Hippolyt., de Hæres. vi. 11.

‖ Hippolyt., de Hæres. vi. See, also, Cooper's "Free Church of Ancient Christendom," an able work, to which the author acknowledges himself much indebted, as having been the first to assign the true authorship to the above work. See, also, Bunsen's "Hippolytus and his Age."

The impudent fabrications set up by Simon on behalf both of himself and Helen are largely related by Hippolytus,* in his treatise on the various heresies. Simon pretended that Helen had heretofore inhabited the body of her ancient namesake, and had been the cause of the Trojan war. He declared that Stesichorus, one of the inventors of lyrical poetry, having lampooned her in his verses, was by her struck blind; but that, as the poet repented and wrote "palinodes," in which he did honor to her, she restored his sight. This bad woman, having been endowed with a body by angels and the powers below, he pretended to have found in Tyre. It may be easily conceived that doctrines derived from such a source were in the highest degree abominable; though he practised under sacred formularies, Simon taught the indifference of human actions, declaring that evil is from arrangement, not from essence. He added, moreover, that the angels having ill-ruled the world, he himself had been sent to put it right; that he had appeared to men as human, though not really such; and, having seemed to suffer, though he did not really suffer (on the cross), he had manifested himself to the Jews as the Son, to the Samaritans as the Father, and in other places as the Holy Spirit. "I," said he, "am the word of God (the *Logos*); I am Beauty; I am the Paraclete; I am the Almighty; I am the whole essence of God."† Some of the Fathers relate of this blasphemous man that, having visited many provinces, he came to Rome at the time when the apostles Peter and Paul were in that city; and that, pretending to be the Christ, he caused himself to be lifted into the air by the help of demons; but that his flight was stopped by the prayers of the apostles, on which he fell to the ground and broke his legs, and that his mortification was so great as to cause him to kill himself, by throwing himself from the top of the house to which he was taken. Suetonius has a story somewhat resembling this, though reduced to very moder-

* See *supra*, Introduction.

† Hieronym., Matt. 24.

ate dimensions; namely, that there was a person who attempted to personate Icarus before Nero, but fell at his first flight, and covered the emperor with his blood.

Hippolytus gives a different version of his death, and one which may be better relied on. He states the fact that Simon met the apostles at Rome, and that Peter set himself to oppose him and his magical pretences. He tells us that Simon, at last, going to —— (the word is illegible), taught his disciples sitting under a plane tree. As his artifices were almost exhausted, in order to prolong his power, he declared that if he were buried alive he would rise on the third day. His disciples having, accordingly, prepared a tomb, he commanded them to bury him. Hippolytus adds, "They indeed did as they were commanded, and there he remains until now, for he was not Christ."* The followers of Simon worshipped two images, which bore the names of Jove and Minerva. It is probable that Simon died about the year 65.†

It is almost impossible to reject the evidence given by Justin Martyr respecting this man, the more worthy of credit because Justin was himself a Samaritan, and was writing to the emperor and to the Roman people themselves.

"After the ascension of Christ into heaven, the demons sent into the world certain men who called themselves gods, and whom ye not only did not disregard, but ye even loaded them with honors. Take, for instance, a certain Samaritan from a village called Gittæ, who, under Claudius Cæsar, with magic miracles, operated on by the art of demons, proclaimed himself in your city of Rome; being held as a god, and by you as a god was honored with a statue, which statue was erected[s] in the

* Hippolyt., de Hæres. vi. 20.

† These quotations will sufficiently illustrate the mythic doctrines of Baur, Strauss, and their followers. They conjectured Simon and Helen to be both allegorical personifications of the sun and moon. They turn out, however, to be as real flesh-and-blood personages as have ever figured upon the pages of history.

island of the Tiber, having this Roman inscription: — 'To Simon, the Sacred God.' This man almost all the Samaritans, and not a few among other nations, confess to be divine and adore." * * * Justin desires afterwards, on behalf of the Christians associated with him, that this statue might be thrown down.* Such was the end of the first heresiarch.

To return, however, to the apostle Peter. Little reasonable doubt can be entertained of that apostle's residence in Rome. It is expressly related that his efforts were specially successful in undermining the influence of Simon in that city. But the enormous claims set up by the Roman Catholic priesthood, as arising from this circumstance, are justified by no authentic incidents recorded by history. The testimonies are comparatively few. Clemens Romanus says, "In his zeal for the truth, Peter bore not one nor two unrighteous inflictions, but underwent many labors, and, having thus suffered martyrdom, went into his due place of glory." † The first statement of the place of his martyrdom is made by Dionysius at the close of the second century.‡ Yet this is liable to some doubts, for in the same passage he speaks of the Corinthian church, of which he was bishop, as the common planting of Peter and Paul; though it is scarcely credible that Peter could have been long resident in Corinth, even if he had visited it on his journey to Rome from the East. So thoroughly imperfect are early traditions! A presbyter of Rome, named Caius, or Gaius, a disciple of Irenæus, relates that the tomb of Peter, as well as Paul, was extant in his day.§ Eusebius records that, after the successful demolition of Simon Magus, so great was the reputation in which Peter was held by the Christians of Rome, that they desired Mark ("Marcus, my son"), the companion of Peter, to leave them an authentic history of the life of our Lord; and it is not impossible that Mark may have recorded what Peter con-

* Justini Martyris, Apolog. Prim. xxvi. lvi.

† Clement. Roman., ad Cor. v. Hefele.

‡ Dionysius, apud Euseb. ii. 25.

§ Apud. Euseb. ii. 25.

veyed to him, and thus formed the gospel which bears his name.*

It is recorded of Peter that, as his wife suffered martyrdom before him, when he saw her led out to execution, he cried to her by name, adding, "Remember the Lord!"† It is also related by Ambrose that Peter before his death, having in a time of great danger begun an escape from Rome, had a vision of his Lord at one of the gates of the city, in which his Master told him that he was about to be crucified again; and that Peter, taking these words to be a reproof of his own pusillanimity in avoiding death, returned and suffered willingly. It is moreover said that this apostle, fearing lest in the act of suffering crucifixion (the punishment to which he was condemned) he might appear emulous of his Divine Master, desired to die with his head downwards; and that his request was granted.

"Hoc mente major, quo minor figura."‡

So perished, as is related, the oldest apostle, A. D. 66.

Peter was soon followed by Paul. This eminent servant of God, after being released from his first captivity at Rome, if that account be the correct one, had visited the churches of Asia Minor, having been previously informed by Epaphras of the occurrences which had affected their welfare since he left them. Especially he had learned how certain Jews had secretly labored to undermine his influence by a new mode of attack, and, by attempting to combine the gospel with the peculiarities of the Essenic system, and to attach to it the ascetic discipline, had become great troubles of the churches. At this time he seems to have written his first letter to Timothy, and his epistle to Titus,§ whom he had taken to Crete, and left behind him there for the purpose of evangelizing that island. After some

* Neander, Planting of Christianity, B. IV. (Bohn).

† Clemens Alex., who records it as a tradition, Φάσι γ'οὖν μακάριον Πέτρον, κ. τ. λ.

‡ Prudent., Peristeph. Hymn XII. § Neander's Planting, &c., B. III.

time he appears to have visited Spain. Clement of Rome speaks of him as having been "a herald of the Word in the east and the west," and as "coming to the limits of the west, and being martyred under the prefects."* It is inferable from this, that, whilst visiting Spain, Paul was seized under the persecution by Nero and sent prisoner to Rome, where he wrote his second letter to Timothy, and perhaps the epistle to the Hebrews. His position was now different from the former. Instead of lying under a vague and indefinite charge from a suspicious quarter, he was now proclaimed "an evil doer." Paul probably suffered in the last year of Nero's reign. General tradition reports him to have been beheaded, his dignity as Roman citizen saving him from a more ignominious punishment. A magnificent mausoleum was in after times built in honor of this apostle, enclosed in a church by Constantine, and celebrated by Prudentius in one of his hymns in honor of both the martyrs:

> "Regia pompa loci est; princeps bonus has sacravit arces,
> Lusitque magnis ambitum talentis." †

The Church of Rome boasts (though the claims are too hollow to bear examination) the possession of many relics of these celebrated apostles. Were the pretences as true as some of them are notoriously self-contradictory, one exemplification of these apostles' humility, charity, and zeal for the truth, were worth them all.‡

* Clement. Roman., ad Cor. V. † Prudent., Peristeph. Hymn XII.

‡ Among the catalogued relics in various parts of Rome, the following occur: — In the church of Santa Croce de Gierusalemmé, "a tooth of St. Peter," "some relics of St. Peter and St. Paul," "a stone from the house of St. Peter, the apostle." In the church of St. Praxede, "a tooth of St. Peter," "a tooth of St. Paul," "the heads of St. Peter and St. Paul." On which a recent writer remarks: — "I had observed that St. Peter and St. Paul were said to be buried at St. Peter's; also that their two heads are said to be again at St. John's of Lateran, where I have seen them exhibited; also, that their two heads are again said to be among the relics at St. Praxede; and I marvelled how these apostles could have two heads at

The extensive early spread of the gospel was very remarkable; not only were the greater cities throughout the Roman empire visited by the apostles and their contemporaries, but, as we

St. Peter's, two more at St. John's, and two again at St. Praxede's, being not less than three heads for each apostle.

"I went, accompanied by many others, into the grottos or subterranean chapels which constitute the vaults on which St. Peter's is built. We were conducted by the sacristan to the altar, which is said to contain the bodies of the two martyred apostles. It is directly under the great high altar of the upper church; and there, in the darkness of that subterranean chapel, these two apostles were said to sleep their sleep of death. The sacristan, with much reverence, called our attention to the spot, and I asked him whether it was indeed certain, whether — inasmuch as learned antiquarians have doubted and even denied it — it had ever been clearly ascertained, by ocular search, that the remains of St. Peter and St. Paul were indeed deposited there. He replied, that there was no doubt of the fact, and that they certainly were there. My wife reminded him that the heads of St. Peter and St. Paul were said to be in the church of St. John of Lateran, and that we had seen them exhibited there in public; and she asked how they could also be in St. Peter's? He replied that it was indeed very true that the heads of the apostles were at St. John's, but that the bodies were at St. Peter's. My wife again reminded him that in some other churches we had seen the arms and legs of these apostles, and suggested that they could not, without unnatural multiplication, be also in St. Peter's. He replied that it was very true that the *arms and legs*, &c., were in other churches, but that the bodies were certainly at St. Peter's, where we now stood. I then took occasion myself to ask whether the whole bodies, without the heads, arms and legs, were there, for that I had seen some of the ribs, shoulders and vertebræ, exhibited in other churches. * * * I than asked if it was possible to see them. * * * He replied that, though they had searched for them, they had never found them, because they were buried too deep — too deep to find them." — "*Pilgrimage to Rome*," *by the Rev. M. H. Seymour.*

"In the Mamertine Prison they point to the altar at which St. Peter said mass while in prison. In these prisons, which are under the Capitol, they show a stone, covered with a grating to preserve it, and presenting a hollow on the surface. It is stated that as Peter descended into the prison a soldier struck him so violently as to knock his head against this stone, leaving the impression of his head upon it! They also show a slab of marble, on which, as an altar, St. Peter said mass; and, having converted the jailer, a spring of water sprung miraculously in the prison, in order to his being baptized. They therefore show a hollow in the floor of the prison as the site of the miraculous spring." — *Ibid.*

learn from Origen, even the country towns and homesteads* in Syria, Cilicia, Parthia, Arabia, Lesser Asia, Greece, Illyricum, Italy, had, at this time, received the truth. Traditions still exist at Malabar of the inhabitants of that coast having received the gospel at the hands of the apostle Thomas, and various circumstances render this not incredible. Mark probably founded the church at Alexandria. Philip preached the gospel in the two Phrygias. A letter of Polycrates, bishop of the church at Ephesus, addressed to Victor, Bishop of Rome, mentions Philip and his daughters, and says that "He sleeps in Hierapolis with his two virgin daughters; and another of his daughters, who lived in the Holy Spirit, rests at Ephesus."† The conversion of the eunuch probably introduced the gospel in Abyssinia, and it found its way into Carthage at a very early period. Christianity appears at this time to have penetrated into Gaul and Germany, and into Spain probably, as we have seen, by the instrumentality of the apostle Paul himself.‡ Such unexampled activity is a marvellous indication of the power and purity which attended the first proclamation of gospel truth.

As to the fate of many of the first Christian laborers we are left in much ignorance. Among the uncertain rumors to which the Catholic church has given currency, the following must be reckoned: — That St. Paul, St. James, the son of Zebedee, Simon Zelotes, or Aristobulus, preached the gospel in Britain; that Joseph of Arimathæa (though another Joseph of later date might have done this) founded the monastery of Glastonbury,

Such is some of the "trumpery" of the "eremites and friars, blue, black, and gray." The chair of St. Peter, to which the Church of Rome attaches considerable importance, will not suffer much injury by being compressed into the same category. See the recent correspondence between Dr. Wiseman and Lady Morgan. The latter maintains that the French, when in possession of Rome, discovered the pretension set up for this chair, as that of St. Peter himself, to be baseless.

* Origen, cont. Cels. lib. iii. c. 9. † Euseb. iii. § 31.

‡ See Neander's Church History, here mainly followed.

or that his stick which he fixed in the ground became the holy thorn for which Glastonbury is famous;* that Mark, though he planted the church at Alexandria, was martyred by being dragged about the city during two days, leaving the ground stained with blood and pieces of his flesh till he died;† that Vitalis suffered martyrdom in the city of Ravenna under Nero;‡ that Hierapolis was preserved by a continual miracle from destruction, because it possessed the body of St. Philip;§ that the episcopal throne of James was exhibited with great reverence in the fourth century; that St. Peter lodged at the house of Pudentiana, a British lady;‖ that St. Petronilla was the daughter of Peter;¶ that St. Maximinus, one of the disciples of our Lord, was the first archbishop of Aix in Provence; that St. Barnabas founded the church at Milan, and was put to death at Cyprus;** that St. Gervasius and Protasius suffered death at Milan under Nero, and that their bones were miraculously made known to St. Ambrose;†† that Processus and Martinian, disciples of St. Peter and Paul, the keepers of the Mamertine prison during the confinement of these apostles, were converted by their ministry, and suffered death soon after them, and that when St. Gregory preached over their tomb miraculous cures followed; that St. Mary Magdalene, or "the other Mary," with Martha, founded a church at Marseilles; that St. Apollinaris was the first Bishop of Ravenna, and a martyr there; that St. Nazarius, son of Perpetua, was the first Bishop of Ravenna, and that, with St. Celsus, his companion,

* This story rests on no better basis than the legends of Matthew of Westminster and John of Glastonbury.

† Mentioned by Bede, who could not have received the fact from any sufficient authority.

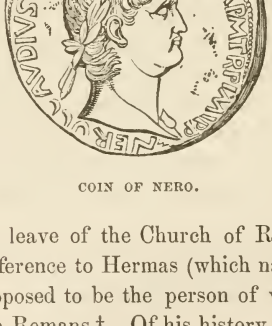
‡ Authority, Fortunatus. § Sermon by an unknown preacher.

‖ Authority, St. Gregory. From this tradition Cardinal Wiseman takes his name. ¶ Bede.

** Authority, Alexander, a monk of Cyprus, of whom nothing is known but that he lived before 1120.

†† Authority, Ambrose, and Augustine, de civ. Dei.

he suffered under Nero, and that St. Ambrose found a vial of the saint's blood as red as when first spilt; — that Nicomedes was a priest of Rome, and was beaten to death with clubs in the reign of Domitian; that St. Thecla was a disciple of Paul, and, having refused a young nobleman as her suitor, was accused at Iconium of being a Christian, and stood unhurt in the amphitheatre amidst the wild beasts; * that St. Jude suffered in Persia; that St. Andrew was crucified on an olive-tree: — these and similar legends may, and perhaps do, embody some fractions of truth; but the sources whence the traditions are derived are so far from the period of the facts, that, unless we can implicitly receive the infallibility of the church which endorses them, we must confess ourselves incompetent to deal with the disentanglement of so complicated a skein.




COIN OF NERO.

Before we take leave of the Church of Rome, we must not omit to make a reference to Hermas (which name appears in his own writings), supposed to be the person of whom Paul speaks in his letter to the Romans.† Of his history, however, Irenæus

* Ambrose, Chrysostom, &c.

† Rom. 16: 14. Eusebius seems, in one place, somewhat inclined to believe his works inspired (lib. III. c. 3), though, in another place, he declares otherwise. Jerome mentions the "Pastor" as being read in the Greek churches, but as almost unknown in the Latin ones. De viris illust., chap. x.

and Clemens Alexandrinus, though they praise his work, say nothing; and Origen is the first to conjecture his relation to the apostles, according to the well-known tendency of tradition to connect similar names with great historical personages. The "Shepherd," though originally written in Greek, is now only preserved in a Latin version, with the exception of a few fragments. As there is little doubt that this production is of a post-apostolical age, we may, for the present, dismiss it from our consideration.*

* Hefele, Patrum Apostolic. Opera; — Prolegomena.

# CHAPTER III.

## JERUSALEM — ITS CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CITY.

We return in this chapter to the Mother-church at Jerusalem. Among those who maintained the doctrines of Christianity in a form inclining as much as possible to the Jewish ritual, none was more conspicuous than the younger James, known by the name of brother, or relative of our Lord. What was his precise relationship is unknown, and is one of the perplexed questions of early ecclesiastical history.* It appears that this apostle was educated as a Nazarene. Eusebius, quoting Hegesippus, says: "He never shaved nor cut his hair; he drank neither wine nor strong liquors, and he abstained from animal food; a razor never came upon his head, and he never anointed with oil or used a bath; — he alone was allowed to enter the sanctuary. He never wore woollen, but linen garments. He was in the habit of entering the Temple alone, and was often found upon his bended knees interceding for the forgiveness of

* See Neander, Planting of the Church, Book iv. c. i.

the people; so that his knees became as hard as camels' in consequence of his habitual supplication. And, indeed, on account of his great piety, he was called the Just and Oblias (or Zaddich and Ozleam), which signifies 'justice and the protection of the people,' as the prophets declare concerning him."* The same writer tells us, on the authority of Clement of Alexandria, that our Lord imparted the γνῶσις (the knowledge of heavenly doctrine) to "James the Just, and to John and Peter, who conveyed it to the other apostles, and they to the seventy."† A great number of traditions exist respecting him, most of them worthy of little credence; as that the church of Jerusalem was commended by Jesus to his care at the ascension;‡ that he wore a plate of gold on his head, in imitation of the Jewish High Priest;§ and that the Jews strove who should touch the border of his garment.‖

The leading sects of the Jews were greatly irritated by the proclamation of the doctrine of the resurrection made by this apostle; and when, in consequence of the appeal of Paul to Cæsar, they were unable to wreak their malice on the head of that apostle, they turned their fury against James. Under the authority of Ananias, the High Priest (who exercised a large power in the interval which elapsed after the death of Festus and the arrival of Albinus as his successor), James was brought with others before the Sanhedrim, accused of breaking the laws of Moses: but so unpopular was the measure as to lead to the ultimate removal of Ananias from the priesthood. By the decision of the council, James was condemned to be stoned as a blasphemer.¶ The circumstances of his death, as related by Hegesippus, are remarkable, though they somewhat differ from Josephus.

Desirous of restraining the progress of the new doctrines

* Euseb., Hist. Eccl. Book II. c. 23.
† Ib., Book II. c. 1.
‡ Jerome, in Gal. Epiphan. Hæres. 87.
§ Ib., Hæres. 20.
‖ Jerome, Gal. i. 19.
¶ Joseph. Antiq., Book XX. c. 9.

among the people, some of the Scribes and Pharisees came to James and endeavored — according to the account of the former author — to cajole him into using his influence to restrain the people from believing in Jesus. They urged him, therefore, as one whose virtues were greatly respected, to place himself on a part of the Temple where he might be seen and heard, and to speak to the multitude. When on that eminence, they publicly asked him to declare what were his sentiments respecting Jesus. To this inquiry, James replied aloud, "Why do you ask me respecting Jesus, the Son of Man? He is now sitting in the heavens on the right hand of great power, and is about to come in the clouds of heaven." A cry arose among the people — "Hosanna to the Son of David." Perceiving, too late, their mistake, the enraged Pharisees cried out, "Justus is himself deceived;" then thrusting him down from his elevation, they proceeded to stone him to death. But, as he was not killed immediately, he began, like Stephen, to pray for his murderers, till a Rechabite, who stood near, cried out, "Stop! what do you intend? The just man is praying for you!" Upon which a fuller, who was present, dashed out the dying man's brains with his club.*

Whatever the precise truth of the story, it is certain that the calamities which speedily followed were attributed by the early Christian fathers, by Jerome, Origen and Eusebius, and even by Josephus (though the passage quoted by Eusebius and Origen is not now extant), to the anger of God at the martyrdom of so distinguished a specimen of goodness and sanctity.†

At the time of the death of Nero, Judea became the scene of an open revolt. Oppressed by the burden of unequal taxation, which pressed the more heavily because of the number of workmen whom the completion of the repairs of the Temple had set

* Hegesippus apud Euseb., Book II. c. 23.

† The Naasenes, one of the varieties of the Ophites, a Gnostic sect, falsely boasted of their doctrines having been delivered by this James to Mariamne.

loose, and overwhelmed by the exactions of Gessius Florus, the Jews rose in revolt. The excited and superstitious credulity of Josephus, who appears to have lent a ready ear to all tales of wonder propagated at this time, has invested the epoch with every form of the marvellous. Yet such was the importance of the crisis, and so immediately was it evidently the act of a divine intervention, that we must not, with a sceptical rationalism, regard all the narrations as incredible. Sudden lights, prodigious and unnatural omens, astonishing appearances in the heavens, and preternatural sounds emitted by no human voices, aroused apprehension as to some great impending change. The time of "vengeance," foretold by the author of the Christian religion, had come; and, warned by the prodigies which continually met their eyes or their ears, the Christians left Jerusalem in consternation, and took up their residence in Pella, a city beyond the Jordan.

On the first news of revolt in the province of Judea, Nero had sent Vespasian, his most experienced general, to take command of the Roman legions. When Otho, who succeeded Nero, died, Vespasian was himself proclaimed emperor by his Jewish army, and it became necessary for him instantly to return to Rome, that he might secure possession of the throne against Vitellius — who was soon afterwards slain. Titus, the son of Vespasian, became, therefore, invested with the command of the Roman army, and was thus the instrument of God's retributive justice against the guilty city. By a remarkable circumstance, Titus pitched his camp on the very side of the city where the crucifixion of Christ had taken place.

At this moment, strongly marking the infatuation which possessed the Jews at the crisis, Jerusalem, notwithstanding the perils to which it was exposed, was a prey to internal faction and disorder. Three distinct parties existed within its walls, full of enmity against each other. The time was the Passover; the very feast at which our Lord had been apprehended and murdered, and the season which raised the number of the tem-

porary occupants of Jerusalem considerably above the usual complement. By these the war now raging was regarded as a sacred one, and many persons had come up to the metropolis for the express purpose of defending its sacred altars against the idolatrous Romans.* But, as the numbers increased, the insufficient stock of provisions in the city was reduced to so low an ebb as to be already almost a famine, whilst the closeness of the siege forbade all further supply. Yet not even the presence and proceedings of the Romans, whom the Jews had regarded as their most deadly foes, silenced the strife which dislocated their internal parties. On the very day of the feast of unleavened bread, the day which commemorated the escape of Israel from Egypt, when Eleazar (the leader of the party called the Zealots), who had possession of the quarter of the Temple, opened the doors of the sanctuary to those who were desirous of worshipping in it, the party of John of Gischala, entering under the pretence of devotion, with swords beneath their cloaks, murdered many of their opponents, and numbers of the

* The events of this last terrible war are related by Josephus, their almost sole historian. Josephus was not an author only, but a politician and a soldier. He was of high, even royal, birth, on the mother's side, and had received an education corresponding to his position. He studied the opinions of the Jewish sects, and for three years himself lived with an Essene ; but ultimately joined the Pharisees. At twenty-six, he went to Rome, and was successful in his object, which was to intercede in behalf of certain Jewish priests. When he returned to Jerusalem, he found everything ripe for revolt. He pleaded with his people for peace, and was chosen Governor of Galilee, an office in which he exhibited great wisdom. On the arrival of Vespasian, Josephus, deserted by the Jews, who fled in terror, took refuge in Tiberias, from which place he wrote to the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, counselling either surrender or prompt measures of defence. Though he felt the Jewish cause to be hopeless, he aided in maintaining the struggle, but was at length taken prisoner by Vespasian, who spared his life, intending to send him to Nero. Josephus, however, having declared to Vespasian his strong conviction that the foretold crisis of the Jewish fate was at hand, was cherished and flattered, and, on the accession of Vespasian to the Roman throne, set free. He thus was in the camp of Titus during the siege of Jerusalem, fully trusted by neither party.

devout and unoffending multitude were slain or trampled to death. After this outrage, the rival parties struck up a truce, thus reducing the three parties within the city to two.

In the mean time, his circumvallations being now completed, Titus arrayed his army on the northern and western side of the city, placing a portion of his troops opposite the tower of Herod, whilst another legion was encamped at the base of the Mount of Olives. At this period the city was defended by walls which ran in triplets wherever special defence was necessary. Titus placed three huge battering engines called Helepoleis (takers of cities) against the outer walls, in which he at length made an effective breach, notwithstanding the united efforts of the besieged to resist their attacks and to destroy them by fire. The Jews then retreated, exhausted and dispirited, behind the second enclosure. Having thus gained possession of the outward wall, Titus began an attack upon the second; pitching his tent upon the spot indicated as "the Assyrian camp," bearing the memory of Sennacherib and his host from ancient days. This fortification was vigorously defended, though the superiority of the Romans in the arts of military warfare was continually made manifest. The Helepoleis was brought to bear upon this wall also; and, after displays of desperate courage and some incidents of treachery also on the part of the Jews, a breach was effected, and the Roman soldiers poured into the lower part of the city, immediately below Moriah, the hill of the Temple. Hoping to save part of the city, Titus had given orders that no violence should be committed. But the Jews began at this point a street warfare of the most destructive kind, and, being well acquainted with the localities of so confined and crowded a spot, almost cut off the Romans, who had pursued them into such a labyrinth. Titus with difficulty drew off his legions. The joy of the Jews was extreme, and not less was the anger of Titus, whose pacific overtures had been treated with such fierce disdain. One circumstance, however, might have reduced the bigoted frenzy of the besieged, had their passions allowed them

a calm moment for reflection, — the famine! But as its progress hitherto had been apparent only among the unemployed multitudes, who rather perplexed than aided the operations, and who were, moreover, generally desirous of effecting a peace with the Romans (an adjustment the thought of which was intolerable to the defenders), it was at present scarcely regarded as a calamity. The Jews, therefore, boldly threw themselves across the breach which had been made, forming "a wall of their own bodies," during three days. On the fourth day, however, Titus compelled them to retreat; thus gaining, a second time, possession of this part of the city, and, throwing down the wall, that it might be no longer available for the defence of the besieged, secured himself in this nobly-contested quarter.

Much, however, yet remained to be gained. The Romans had only established themselves in the inferior portions of the city, and the Jews still held possession of Mount Moriah, defended by the Castle of Antonia on the one side, and of Mount Zion on the other. At this time Titus ordered a pause. He knew the progress which the famine was making among the inhabitants; and as he still trusted that the Jews would see the folly of further resistance, he determined to display in their view his iron-clad and well-appointed legions. But the Jews, who were aware of the deep indignation which filled the breasts of their enemies, saw in these formidable legions only the excitements to a more despairing ferocity. These passions were aided, too, by the malign influence of a corrupted religion. Strong in their conviction of a divine descent, and perpetually misinterpreting the whole course of ancient prophecy, they persisted in the belief, that, sinners though they were, and guilty as a nation of rejecting continually the divine overtures, some last interposition of God's power would rescue them from so imminent a danger.

Four days thus passed; on the fifth, Titus, seeing no proposal of submission on the part of the Jews, prepared to carry meas-

ures to their utmost extremity. The besieged, however, who had the advantage of occupying the most elevated parts of the city, fought the Romans with great effect. Titus, therefore, sent Josephus to remonstrate from a safe place with the Jews, and to urge on their consideration the madness of further resistance to the Roman general. His reclamations were received with favor by the populace, but with the most violent indignation by the warlike rulers. They resolved to prosecute the war to the last extremity.

In the mean time famine was accomplishing its slow but deadly work. No market offered food for the supply of the perishing, and robbers prowled about the streets in search of subsistence. When these men found a supply, they violently took it; when they found none, they tortured their helpless victims to induce them to discover it. A few, who yet retained property, sacrificed all they had for a single meal, and having obtained it, barricaded their houses, in order to eat it in peace, devouring it half-baked, or sometimes altogether raw. "Children pulled the very morsels that their fathers were eating out of their very mouths.* What was still more to be pitied, so did the mothers do as to their infants; and when those that were most dear were perishing under their hands, they were not ashamed to take from them the very last drop that might preserve their lives. And while they ate after this manner, yet were they not concealed in so doing; but the seditious everywhere came upon them immediately, and snatched away from them what they had gotten from others; for when they saw any house shut up, this was to them a signal that the people within had gotten some food; whereupon they broke open the doors, and ran in and took pieces of what they were eating almost out of their very throats, and this by force. The old men, who

* It must be remembered that this is related of Jewish children, whose reverence for their parents was part of their religion, and was remarkably conspicuous.

held their food fast, were beaten; and if the women hid what they had within their hands, their hair was torn for so doing, nor was there any commiseration shown either to the aged or to infants; but they lifted up children from the ground as they hung upon the morsels they had gotten, and shook them down upon the floor. But still were they more barbarously cruel to those that had prevented their coming, and had actually swallowed down what they were going to seize upon, as if they had been unjustly defrauded of their right. They also invented terrible methods of torments to discover where any food was, and they were these: to drive sharp stakes into them, and a man was forced to bear what was terrible even to hear, in order to make him confess that he had but one loaf of bread, or that he might discover a handful of barley-meal that was concealed. And this was done when these tormentors were not themselves hungry; for the thing had been less barbarous had necessity forced them to it. But this was done to keep their madness in exercise, and was making preparation of provision for themselves on the following days. These men went, also, to meet those who had crept out of the city by night as far as the Roman guards, to gather some plants and herbs that grew wild; and, when those people thought they had got clear of the enemy, they snatched from them what they had brought with them, even while they had frequently entreated them, and that by calling upon the tremendous name of God, to give them back some part of what they had brought, though these would not give them the least crumb, and they were to be well contented that they were only spoiled, and not slain at the same time." * Some were destroyed under the plea that they were in secret intelligence with the Romans; miserable victims were despoiled by one faction after another; the city swarmed with acts of atrocity. In the mean time the Roman soldiers captured those who wandered beyond their defences in search of sustenance,

* Josephus, Wars, Book v. c. 11. (Whiston.)

and whipped, tortured, and sacrificed them. Each day witnessed five hundred Jews in this case. Though he greatly pitied their sufferings, Titus urged his soldiers to persist in this cruelty, still vainly hoping to terrify the besieged against further and useless resistance. The hatred which the Romans bore the Jews made them too willing accomplices in these acts of torture, which proceeded so far as that "room was wanting for the crosses, and crosses wanting for the bodies."

Still the Jews yielded not. They represented these cruelties as the tender mercies which might be expected from the Romans if they should surrender, and used the occasion to endeavor to inflame the mind of the populace still more. With a view to remedy this evil, Titus sent back others with their hands cut off, that they might remonstrate with the besieged, and that they might urge the Jews not to force him to destroy the city and the Temple. In the mean while the siege proceeded. The Jews at length succeeded in setting fire to the Helepoleis, and, in the confusion of the conflagration, advanced even to the Roman intrenchments. Titus, who had been absent at this time reconnoitring the Castle of Antonia, returned in the very crisis to rally his wavering legions; accomplishing his purpose with much difficulty, since the confusion and noise was so great that friend could not be distinguished from foe. Defeated in his plans of direct attack, the Roman general resolved to enclose the city within one vast intrenchment, unconscious that he was thus literally fulfilling one part of our Lord's prophecies, — "The days will come when thine enemies will cast a trench about thee, and keep thee in on every side." * This measure gave to the progress of the famine its final emphasis; it was the scorpion surrounded by fire. Escape and relief were alike impossible. Whilst the Romans ostentatiously exhibited before the Jews the abundance of their provisions, the dead lay within the city, unburied in the houses, and rotting in the streets.

* Luke.

Gaunt spectres of humanity shrunk from each other's view. Those who undertook to perform the rites of sepulture fell dead even in the performance of the sacred duty. And what especially gave a character to the scene was, that, though a midnight gloom was everywhere, there were no wailings; the silence of despair brooded over the city, except where robbers burst into the houses, plundering the corpses, and sometimes giving the final blow to those who were dying of the famine. To bury the dead became, at length, impossible; and at last the bodies were thrown from the walls to the valleys below. As he beheld the fearful and disgusting spectacle which met his eyes at every turn, Titus, spreading out his hands to heaven, called God to witness that *he* was not the author of such incredible calamities.

Josephus truly says that some of the leaders of the Jewish party were "incapable of repentance." Another crime was now added by them to the already swollen and fearful catalogue of their outrages. Simon, a leader of one of the rival factions in the city (which post he had gained by means of Matthias, the High Priest), chose this time to turn traitor to his benefactor, and, accusing the pontiff of a secret understanding with the Romans, condemned him and his three sons to death. One of them had fled to the camp of Titus, which might have occasioned the charge. Matthias asked only this favor, that, as he had been the means of raising Simon to power, he might be the first executed; but even this small consolation was denied him. At the same time, fifteen of the magnates among the Jews were executed; the father of Josephus was imprisoned; whilst all who expressed any lamentation for any of these persons were immediately put to death, without trial.

The execration excited by these atrocities induced some of the Jews, headed by one Judas, to revolt against such tyranny. They offered, to some of the Roman army, to surrender. But the Romans paid little attention to them. The plot was made

known to Simon; who, seeing Titus approach the spot where Judas was, slaughtered the men before the eyes of the prince, then threw their dead bodies before his face. At this crisis Josephus narrowly escaped death, being wounded by a stone directed against him; but he was rescued without any fatal injury. Many who had deserted to the Romans died from repletion after so cruel a famine. Others, who had swallowed gold before leaving the city to take refuge in the Roman camp, were put to death, on their arrival, by the Arabian and Syrian allies, who hoped to find treasure in their bodies. Two thousand deserters met with this fate in one night. Nothing but the impossibility of dealing with so many offenders prevented Titus from inflicting the most summary justice upon such offenders in his own army.

John, who had possession of the Temple, availed himself of its treasures, and used the supplies of wine and oil which had been laid up for the purposes of sacrifices to alleviate the want of the people; a fact which Josephus considers as one of the most heinous offences committed during the siege. Among the proofs of the terribleness of the crisis, it is stated that a deserter told Titus that there had been carried out, at a single gate of the city, of which he had the charge, one hundred and fifteen thousand dead bodies. The number was ascertained by the public money he was required to pay for the removal of the corpses. The whole city was, in fact, surrounded by pestilential materials; everywhere the armies trod upon rotting corpses as they went to their destructive work.

The Romans now proceeded to erect military works against the untaken portions of the city, cutting down for that purpose all the trees to be found on the spot, and in the vicinity of the city. The historian pathetically describes the desolation thus caused: "The war had laid all signs of beauty quite waste; and, if any one that had known the place before, and had now come on a sudden to it, he would not have known it again; but,

though he were at the city itself, he would have, notwithstanding, inquired for it."*

These outworks were at length completed, though, worn out by the processes of so severe a siege, the Roman army became dispirited, and saw no probability of a speedy termination of their labors; whilst, on the other hand, the Jews were so much divided among themselves, that they no longer acted with their former energy. At length. however, the wall, having been undermined by the engines, fell suddenly. The Romans advanced to the breach, but found only an interior wall which the Jews had built behind it. On advancing to this second defence, Titus harangued his troops, setting before them the dangers of this new enterprise, but exhorted them to courage, and animated them by the assurance that God was evidently on the side of the besiegers. He told them that, if they could gain the Castle of Antonia, the victory would be secure. The danger of the attempt was great, and the army listened in silence, till one Sabinus, a Syrian, offered to ascend the wall. He advanced, followed only by eleven others; and, in the midst of a tremendous shower of darts and stones, succeeded in gaining the top of the defence, driving the enemy before him. This victory was, however, but momentary. Sabinus stumbled on a stone, and fell; the Jews returned, surrounded him, and he was slain amidst a shower of darts. But the next effort was more successful. In the middle of the night, a party of soldiers secretly scaled the defence, cut the throats of the sentinels as they slept, and then ordered a trumpeter, whom they had taken with them, to blow a blast. Hearing the sound, Titus ordered his men to scale the Antonia. This produced a rout among the Jews, who fled to the Temple, some of them falling into the mines which John had dug for the destruction of the Roman soldiers. The Jews defended the Temple with the utmost energy, being well aware that its conquest would be one of the most important

* Josephus, Wars, Book vi. c. 1. (Whiston.)

points of the siege. Accordingly, there took place at this spot a furious conflict, in which the Jews and Romans fought hand to hand. The contest lasted for many hours, till the narrow passages were heaped with dead, and Titus was compelled to recall his men, having only gained possession of the Castle of Antonia.

The Roman general, having razed the fortress to the ground, determined to make one last effort to persuade the Jews to surrender, by means of Josephus as a mediator. But this remonstrance, like all preceding ones, was unavailing. The Romans now began to raise their banks against the court of the Gentiles, exposed continually to the sallies of the Jews, who disputed every fraction of the ground. Among other means of resistance, the besieged filled the western cloisters with inflammable materials, — wood, sulphur, and naphtha, — and when the Romans had mounted the spot with scaling-ladders, they found themselves enveloped in inextinguishable and torturing fire, by which many of them were destroyed. Meantime the famine went on, presenting such aspects of horror as that the recording historian shudders at the recital. The claims of friendship and relationship were trampled down in the universal cry for food. The streets were filled with the reeling victims. Old hay, shoots of trees, girdles, shoes, the leather which formed the military shields, were sold at enormous prices. The instincts of life — even those of maternal affection — were extinguished by this all-pervading appetite. Josephus relates the almost incredible story of a woman, once distinguished by family and riches, who, after having been repeatedly plundered by successive exactions, at length murdered her own son, roasted the body for food, and devoured half of the execrable food, reserving the rest for a future meal. She was invaded by a body of ruffians, who, attracted by the smell of the horrible repast, threatened her with instant death, unless she gave up the viands she had concealed. She declared that she had a portion of it reserved for them, and, producing the remnant of her meal, she invited them to

partake it. But such a mother's meal was without precedent; and, trembling with consternation, the miscreants refused to partake of it. Had the Jews been versed even in their own written law, they might have remembered that their great prophet, Moses, had literally foretold even this fearful incident.

The Temple was constructed of an outer and an inner court. After much effort, the Romans had become masters of the former, the court of the Gentiles; and their instruments of war now began to be applied to the sacred edifice itself. But so strongly had the wall been built that the labor of six days produced no effect upon the well-adjusted structure. It was necessary, therefore, to scale it. How the national feelings of a Jew would be outraged by such an attack on the holy and beautiful house which his fathers builded, we need not declare; — the defence was obstinate. The Roman was allowed to mount the ladder, but the effort of the defender was to dislodge him when he had ascended it, or to slay him before he could protect himself with his shield. The only way by which Titus could gain admission was by fire; and the application of this to the cloister of wood-work soon hemmed the defenders within an impassable circle. Such was the paralysis which followed the first discovery, that they neither made efforts to defend themselves nor to quench the flames. Desirous still of sparing the Temple, Titus at length ordered his cohorts to quench the fire, and resolved the next day to take the building by storm. The crisis was a remarkable one. On this day six hundred and fifty-eight years the Temple had been burnt by Nebuchadnezzar. Nearly at the same time, more than thirty years since, many of these same Jews who were now so obstinately defending the holy city were imbruing their hands in the blood of their own Messiah. On the evening of the day a soldier, without orders, wearied with the protracted siege, and full of revenge at the obstinacy which had occasioned it, seized a burning brand and threw it into a small gilded door in the portico of the Temple. The flames spread with extreme rapidity amidst such inflammable mate-

rials. Titus, being informed of the occurrence, ran in haste to the Temple, followed by his generals, and used every endeavor to stop the progress of the conflagration. But the noise and clamor produced by the battle raging around prevented his voice from being heard, and in the confusion his eager gestures received no attention. In fact, the passions of his soldiers could be no longer restrained, and they encouraged one another in the work of burning destruction, whilst many of them were pushed by the crowd into the flaming ruins, and perished miserably. Amidst the blazing destruction the battle went on. The altar was surrounded by heaps of dead bodies, and the altar-steps were drenched in blood. Titus penetrated into the Holy Place, which the fire had not yet reached, and the spectacle which he witnessed made him increasingly anxious to quench the fire. But the sight of the treasures of the Temple and the hope of plunder gave a fresh stimulus to the Roman soldiers. One of them, in the absence of the commander, set fire to the gate, and a wide sheet of flame catching the dry cedar wood enveloped the whole almost instantaneously. A scene of terrible confusion followed. Some were engaged in plundering the treasures which the piety of many years had accumulated in the sacred receptacle; others slew, without mercy, all within their reach. The flames, reflected from the surrounding eminences and buildings, caused the whole city to seem on fire. The noise of the crackling material was mixed with the shout of the attacking legions, the groans of the wounded and famishing, and the execrations of the desperate Jews, whilst each sound reverberated from the surrounding hills. The whole enclosure of Mount Moriah was so full of the bodies of the dead that the ground was nowhere visible. From the summit of the Temple the besieged plucked the golden spikes which had adorned it, with the lead in which it had been imbedded, and hurled them at their enemies. Then, with great difficulty, the leaders of the Jews fought their way across the bridge, which, spanning the Tyropœon, connected Mount Mo-

riah with Mount Zion; and took refuge in the upper city. The desolation was complete. The sun of Jerusalem's glory was set. God had forsaken her. "The law had perished from the priests and counsel from the ancients." The blood of the crucified One was, according to their own imprecation, upon his crucifiers, and on their children. The Roman army established themselves on Mount Moriah; brought thither their military ensigns; offered there their heathen sacrifices, and realized to the very letter the predictions of Jesus when, looking down from the Mount of Olives upon the splendid city, he had foretold how "the abomination of desolation" should be seen to stand in the Holy Place.

The riches obtained by the Romans from the plunder of the Temple were so great that gold was reduced in Syria to half its value.

After the destruction of the Temple, the upper city continued to hold out during a considerable period. It was, however, at length taken by the victorious Romans, who plundered, burnt and slew, without mercy. Titus ordered the city to be razed to the ground, excepting the towers of Hippicus, Phasaelis and Mariamne, which were allowed to remain, and the whole area was afterwards ploughed over by Terentius Rufus. The Jews who were taken captive were either sold for slaves (though they were so contemptuously regarded that few purchasers could be found) or were retained to grace the approaching triumph of Titus. According to Josephus, the number of his destroyed countrymen was enormous. In Jerusalem alone one million one hundred thousand were put to death, whilst the total number of Jews slain during the progress of the whole insurrection amounted to one million three hundred and fifty-six thousand four hundred and sixty. The number of prisoners exceeded one hundred thousand.

The reader who is acquainted with the imposing military processions which the Romans dignified by the title of a triumph, can imagine with what honors the victorious prince who

had succeeded, after such difficulties and bloodshed, in conquering Jerusalem at the close of a six months' siege, was received in Rome. On this occasion the father and son appeared together for the first time as recipients of triumphal honors. The gorgeous procession wound its way from the Campus Martius along the Via Triumphalis to the Porta Triumphalis, and passing through the public parts of the city, came to the Capitol. The music and the sacrifices preceded the train. Then followed the rich spoils, consisting of large quantities of gold taken out of the Temple and presenting to the eyes of the

ARCH OF TITUS.

delighted people the Book of the Law and the seven-branched candlestick, the trumpets, with the table of shewbread, which had adorned the Temple. After this, followed the captives, the long train of persons carrying perfumes, the lictors, etc., till the eye rested on the victorious generals themselves, whose elation, as they rode in their gilded chariots amid the applause of

the spectators, was designed to be moderated by the slave who whispered in their ears, "Remember thou art but a man."

In memory of this great event, Vespasian built a temple to Peace, in which he deposited the Jewish trophies. He erected besides an arch of triumph, the first specimen of the Composite order, embellished with bas-reliefs, which remains to this day, though now tottering beneath the weight of years. Before its commencement, however, Titus was no more.

Nothing could stand in a more important relation to Christianity than this memorable destruction of a city which had been so remarkably bound up with an external and national religion. To continue their adherence to the ancient system, the whole apparatus of which had suddenly been so fearfully destroyed, was, in the case of the Christian believers, a matter almost impossible; and, as the Temple and the sacrifice had faded from their view, they were taught to look with a deeper estimate of value on that declaration and prediction of our Lord, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Origen, in commenting on the passage "ordained by angels in the hands of a Mediator," declares that "at the death of Christ angels forsook the city."* If this were so, it was in order that the Mediator might be rendered more visible by the destruction of the external system which had obscured him.

For sixty years following this event, few materials of information exist relative to this celebrated church. It appears, however, from the testimony of Eusebius, that a consultation of our Lord's surviving disciples was held respecting the person who should become successor to the martyred James, and that the choice fell upon Simeon, the son of Mary, the daughter of Cleopas. Eusebius gives us, moreover, a list of his thirteen successors down to the time of Hadrian. He relates that Vespasian instituted a search for the descendants of the family of

* In Jer., Hom. XIII. D.

David, in order to destroy them, which was the cause of a severe persecution against the Jews; and that, in the next reign but one, Domitian, following up his design, laid hands upon the relations of Christ who were reported to him as of the seed royal of the Jews. When these persons, who were grandchildren of James, were brought before the emperor, he inquired of them if they were descendants of David. This they acknowledged. He then asked what was their property. They replied that they had between them nine thousand denarii (about two hundred and eighty pounds), which was altogether invested in land, and that they supported themselves by their own labor, of which fact the hands they held up before him were a sufficient proof. Being interrogated respecting Christ's kingdom, they replied: "It is not a temporal or earthly kingdom, but celestial and angelic, — it will appear at the end of the world, when, coming in glory, Christ will judge the quick and dead, and give to every man according to his works." This reply was probably as embarrassing to Domitian as the explanation which Christ had given at an earlier day to Pilate. They were therefore dismissed in safety by the emperor, and continued to live even in the times of Trajan.* Tertullian declares that Nerva ordered that those who had been expelled by Domitian should return to their homes in peace.

Simeon, the second Bishop of Jerusalem, lived till the time of Trajan. During that reign a partial insurrection of the Jews took place, in the course of which the bishop was reported to the authorities as being one of the blood-royal of David, and, moreover, a Christian. (He was now in extreme old age, — Hegisippus says, one hundred and twenty-four years old.) He and his relations underwent great torture, to the surprise of all those who witnessed his aged appearance, and he was at last ordered to suffer death by crucifixion.

* Hegisippus, apud Euseb., Book III. c. xx.

Hegisippus* relates, that so long as the church at Jerusalem was under the watchful care of the apostles, or of those who learned from them the truth of religion, it was kept pure; but that when their guardianship was removed, false doctrine immediately crept in. We must probably understand this declaration, of overt divisions rather than of secret opinions; for the manifest tendency of the Jewish believers was to heretical and anti-Christian notions, even in the days of the apostle Paul himself. It appears that Hegisippus, in order to render his history more complete, paid a visit to Rome, where he resided some time, collecting materials for his future narrative.

Before we leave this chapter, it is necessary for us to make mention of an epistle bearing the name of Barnabas, and especially addressed to his brethren the Jews. Its authority is derived from the quotation of Clement of Alexandria, who calls the author an apostle; from that of Origen, who quotes it as the Catholic Epistle of Barnabas, in his reply to Celsus; and from that of Eusebius, who also mentions it as a catholic epistle, though his testimony is not perfectly consistent. Hefele conjectures it to have been written not long before the year 120, and therefore not to be properly attributable to Barnabas. In truth, many parts of it bear the indication of a later age, as when, for instance, in commenting upon the passage which declares that Abraham circumcised three hundred and eighteen men, he endeavors to prove, that as the expression of the

* Hegisippus was a convert from Judaism to the Christian faith. He lived between the years 165—180, and wrote, it appears, an Ecclesiastical History of the early ages, of which the only remnants are found in Eusebius. This writer is suspected of favoring anti-Pauline doctrines. Neander founds the charge (with some conscious embarrassment) upon the exceptions taken by Hegisippus to the words, "Eye hath not seen," &c. But the reader who has perused the recently-discovered work of Hippolytus will recognize the phrase as that frequently employed by Justin, a Gnostic, against whom the reclamations of Hegisippus are evidently directed. It is not so easy, however, to defend Hegisippus against the charge of credulity in some of the stories to which he has given currency.

number ten corresponds with the Greek I, and the word eight corresponds with the Greek H, the two letters were prophetic of the word Jesus; and as the number three hundred is signified by the letter T, that number was indicative of Christ's cross. There are moreover indications of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration little accordant with the views certainly entertained by Barnabas. In fact, the whole epistle breathes an allegorical spirit by no means corresponding with an apostolic age.

To the authentic accounts of the church at Jerusalem the Romanists have not failed to add their legends.* They relate, for instance, that St. Nicodemus being ejected from the synagogue for believing in Christ, and afterwards retiring to the country-house of St. Gamaliel, who is supposed to have been a secret professor of Christianity, died there, and that he miraculously discovered his relics to Lucian, by a vision in the year 415.

Disheartened as was the spirit of the surviving Jews by such a series of fearful calamities as we have related, it was not even yet extinguished. In the eighteenth year of Adrian's reign (A. D. 135) the Jews, led on by Barchochebas, who, like Barabbas, was a robber, revolted, maintaining a position of defensive hostility at Bithera, which Eusebius tells us was not far from Jerusalem. They were, however, at length subdued, and every Jew was, by a special decree of Hadrian, prohibited from entering the country of which Jerusalem was the centre. On the site of the sacred city a new one now began to arise, called Ælia, in honor of the emperor, and a Christian church was formed there. This church had lost all traces of Jewish peculiarity, and had indeed a Gentile Christian for its bishop. His name was Marcus. But the Ælian Christians were regarded with suspicion and dislike by those who still practised adherence to the Mosaic law, and from the latter party the Ebionites, of whom we shall hereafter speak, arose.

* On the authority of the Clementine forgeries.

EPHESUS.

## CHAPTER IV.

### EPHESUS AND JOHN.

At the head of one of three deep bays which jag the coast of Turkey in Asia, the traveller discovers, with some difficulty, the remains of the once celebrated city of Ephesus. These ruins are situated in a beautiful valley shut in by encircling hills, and covered with a luxurious but desolate vegetation. A malarious swamp extends from these ancient remains to the sea; and

undistinguishable heaps of ruined masonry, intermingled with Corinthian ornaments, and bearing traces of Roman origin, crowd about the spot. In the immediate neighborhood is a poor Turkish village, evidently built out of the ruins of the ancient city, bearing the name of Aiasaluck. Time has trodden heavily on all that once constituted the pride and glory of the Eastern world, and the great city which Justin relates to have been just erected by the Amazons — and Strabo by the son of Codrus — has long ceased to present anything worthy of the title of the Metropolis of Asia. Yet history regards Ephesus as deserving of peculiar distinction; its most celebrated structures challenged the admiration of antiquity as among the first wonders of the world. Lysimachus removed the site of the city nearer to the sea than it had been before, and re-peopled it with inhabitants from Lebedus and Colophon. During the reign of Tiberius the new metropolis was greatly shaken by an earthquake, but by command of that emperor the ruins were repaired, and several important improvements effected. The marsh which at present fills the vicinity with malaria was then the celebrated port of Ephesus. Its waters are now useless for any commercial purpose.

The principal glory of Ephesus was, however, its temple of Diana. The structure had been, at the time of which we write, recently reërected (it had been destroyed at the date of Alexander's birth, by Herostratus, having undergone altogether seven erections), at the expense of all the Asiatic states; and, to secure it against inundation, its foundations had been laid in beds of charcoal. Two hundred and twenty years had been consumed in its erection, whilst marble, precious woods and gold, had been employed profusely in its decoration. Its bas-reliefs were the work of Scopas, — its altar, of Praxiteles. Its shrine was an object of devotion to the followers of the pagan mythology. All Ionia paid an annual visit to Ephesus in celebration of the festival of Diana, and the most costly presents were offered in honor of her worship. These rites were accom-

panied by sacred games. The priests of Diana were limited to a peculiar diet, and were not permitted to enter any private house. Those who came up to the annual feast made a point of obtaining silver medals of the temple, the execution and sale of which were a source of high profit to the inhabitants.

No city was more celebrated than this metropolis of Lesser Asia for the profession and practice of the occult arts. The Acts of the Apostles speak of "certain wandering Jews, exorcists." These pretended magicians were chiefly Jews, principally from Alexandria, who, availing themselves of cabalistic traditions, specimens of which abound in the Talmud, deluded the ignorant and unwary. An illustration of such persons, given by Josephus, may render their practices more familiar to the general reader:

"I have seen a certain man of my own country, whose name was Eleazar, releasing people that were demoniacs, in the presence of Vespasian, his sons, his captains, and the whole multitude of his soldiers. The manner of the cure was this: he put a *ring*, that had a *root* of one of these sorts mentioned by Solomon, to the nostrils of the demoniac, after which he drew out the demon through his nostrils; and, when the man fell down, immediately he adjured him to return into him no more, making still mention of *Solomon*, and reciting the incantations that he had composed. And when Eleazar would persuade the spectators that he had such power, he set, at a little distance, *a cup of water*, and commanded the demon, as he went out of the man, to overturn it; and, when this was done, the skill and wisdom of Solomon were showed very manifestly."*

The "Ephesian letters," as they were called, which were a kind of magical incantation founded on the inscription on the goddess' statue, written on parchment, and worn after the manner of the phylactery of the Jews, were held in great repute as amulets, or charms. Clemens Alexandrinus mentions the

* Joseph. Antiq. book viii. c. 2, § 5. Whiston's edition.

invention of these "letters" as being doubtfully ascribed to the dactyli, or priests of Cybele, so called, according to him, because they were the inventors of musical notes. He thus describes the letters:

ΑΣΚΙΟΝ, ΚΑΤΑΣΚΙΟΝ, ΛΙΞ, ΤΕΤΡΑΞ, ΔΑΜΝΑΜΕΝΕΥΣ, ΑΙΣΙΑ,

and gives the following explanation:

"*Askion* signifies darkness, for it has no shade; *Kataskion* light, for it brightens darkness; *Lix* is the earth, by an ancient appellation; *Tetrax* a year, because of the hours; *Damnameneus* means the sun, which subdues; and *Aisia* the voice of truth." Other explanations follow:* These "letters" were the basis of the Abraxas of the Basilidians, and the prototypes of the Abracadabras of after times. The words appear to have been inscribed on amulets, and used as charms. When Milesius and Ephesius contended at the Olympic games, Milesius was reputed unsuccessful because his rival had "Ephesian letters" attached to his heels; when these were removed, he conquered.†

The goddess Artemis, who seems to have been identical with the Latin Diana, was worshipped by the Greeks under different varieties. She of Ephesus seems to have represented the all-producing powers of nature, and to have been identical with Ashtoreth, the goddess of ancient Palestine. The Ephesians asserted that her image fell from heaven. She was adored under the figure of an upright mummy: her mural crown signified her protection of cities; her breastplate, ornamented with pearls, and bearing the signs of the zodiac, implied her care of the seasons; her hands were outspread, as in the act of conveying blessings to mankind; a multitude of breasts appeared above

* Clemen. Alex. Stromat. lib. v.

† See Suidas apud Dr. A. Clarke, on Acts xix. Such arts were greatly practised and greedily sought in the time of the Roman empire. Adrian was addicted to the study of them. Lucian mentions them as having been practised by the most noted men of Rome; and every reader of Apuleius is familiar with the practice, through his novel.

her girdle, representing her as the source of nutriment; the other parts of her body covered with lions, bulls, stags, animals of all kinds, birds, and even insects, intimated her care of all creatures. She was, in short, an allegorical representation of the universal mother; "the precious things put forth by the moon." Her symbol was the bee; her priests were eunuchs; her high-priest bore the title of king.

The morality of the people of Ephesus was extremely low. It was the maxim of Heraclitus, the Ephesian philosopher, that truth admitted of falsehood to maintain its cause; and this maxim seems to have been extensively adopted in the Ephesian code.* The prevalence of the heathen system in that city brought in its train innumerable vices, tending to debase the character of the inhabitants; whilst the association of the worship with the mysteries known only to the initiated opened a new source of corruption and obscenity.†

The gospel had been first planted at Ephesus by the labors of the apostle Paul, on his third missionary journey. During three months he had attended the Jewish synagogues in that city, till the opposition made to his doctrines caused him to remove from the Jews, and to teach the Gentiles in a school belonging to a rhetorician, named Tyrannus.‡ There he remained two years, preaching and working miracles. His performance of these miracles led to a singular demonstration,

* Clemen. Alex. Strom. v. This was in perfect accordance with the received maxims of the Gentile philosophy. "Better to utter a lie than the unwelcome truth," said Menander. "Good is better than truth," said Proclus. "When telling a lie will be profitable, let it be told," said Darius, in Herodotus. "He may lie who knows how to do it at the right time," said Plato. "There is nothing decorous in truth, but when it is profitable; truth is hurtful, and lying is profitable to men," said Tyrius. These instances are cited by Whitby, and quoted in Adam Clarke's commentary on Eph. 4 : 25.

† See, in Warburton's "Divine Legation," much learning and not a little conjecture on this subject.

‡ Acts 19 : 9.

similar to that which we have before related of Simon Magus. Perceiving the efficacy of the powers put forth by the apostle, the magicians of the city began to exercise their unlawful arts, by using, not the heathen formula they had hitherto adopted, but a new one they had learned from Paul, — the name of Jesus. When the delusion was practised by the seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, upon a possessed man, the evil spirit, instead of yielding to the incantation, became furious, and leaped out with violence, inflicting much personal damage on those who had thus falsely adjured him. The fame of the transaction spread, and produced a wide excitement in favor of the religion of the Nazarene. Jews and Greeks embraced the new gospel. Books of magic, to the amount of fifty thousand pieces of silver, were extensively burnt. The gospel had gained a new and important conquest.

But the powers of darkness could not permit this victory to be achieved without a struggle. One of the silver-workers, named Demetrius, called around him all his fellow-tradesmen, and represented to them the injury their trade was suffering; and that, if this religion were permitted to continue, they would not only suffer loss in their own particular trade, but would seriously damage the reputation of the temple of Diana and its worshippers, all over Asia. They therefore convoked a meeting of the inhabitants in the theatre, often used, in those days, as a place of public deliberation. The utmost confusion prevailed; and when one Alexander, a Jew, attempted to address the multitude, they, suspecting him to be a Christian, put him down by the most violent clamor, shouting aloud, during two whole hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" It is probably to this occurrence that the apostle refers when, with a strong but not uninstructive metaphor, he speaks of "fighting with beasts at Ephesus." The uproar threatened serious consequences, and was only allayed by the recorder of the city (Ὁ γραμματεύς), who, obtaining a hearing, persuaded those who complained of

injury to prefer their charges, if they had any, before the proper and competent tribunals.

When Paul left Ephesus, Timothy still remained in that city, to carry on the spiritual work which had been so auspiciously begun. A church was regularly organized, under the directions written by Paul, in his first epistle to that young minister. Here Timothy had to contend with many evils, which threatened a defalcation; among others, the endeavors of the Jewish doctors to bring back the faith of Moses, the indulgence of expensive habits of dress by the female converts, and the licentious practices of some of the professors of Christianity.* Yet, notwithstanding the cautions administered to the Ephesians, these evils appear to have increased, and to have gradually undermined the purity of a religion which had been so advantageously introduced. After the death of Paul, the apostle John, feeling that the Christians of Asia Minor imperatively demanded his superintending and protecting care, took up his residence in Ephesus, exercising a pastoral vigilance over the churches around. Here he probably suffered, not only from the outskirts of the storm of the persecutions under Nero, but from the influence of the Judaizing teachers, and especially from a sect called Nicolaitans,† who seem to have proclaimed the Antinomian doctrine, that to a Christian, firm in the faith of Christ, temptation and idolatry were matters of no spiritual moment, and demanded no special abstinence. The state of the churches around the apostle may be easily inferred, from the divine warnings addressed to them in the book of Revelation. *Smyrna*, one of the finest cities of Asia Minor, boasting of a considerable population, held fast the doctrine of the cross, and flourished

* 1 Timothy.

† Euseb. iii. c. 17. Irenæus and Hippolytus both trace the origin of this sect to Nicholas, mentioned in Acts vi. as one of the seven deacons; asserting that he combined in his system idolatry and licentiousness. To this reference is made in Rev. 2: 6. "This thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate."

greatly. *Pergamos*, capital of the province of Asia Propria, was faithful in general to the truth, but possessed members not a little corrupted by the Nicolaitan heresy. In the person of Antipas, one of its number, it had suffered, probably by the persecution under Nero. *Thyatira* had listened to heretical influences, led away, principally, by a female member of the community, and was in some danger, though still possessing many excellences. *Sardis*, the capital of the ancient kingdom of Lydia, once one of the richest cities of Asia, and now a somewhat declining city, was already rotten at the heart, though still preserving the external forms of Christianity, and possessing some few members uncorrupted by the general defection. *Philadelphia*, though not numerous, was troubled by the Judaizing perverters, but was, as yet, unfallen. The spirit of *Laodicea* was departed already, and, like Sardis, it had yielded to the enervating influences of worldliness and spiritual pride. These influences had already done much to corrupt Ephesus itself, though it was still distinguished for its fidelity and zeal.

It was apparently about this time that several anti-Christian, though calling themselves Christian, sects appeared in Asia Minor, some of them known for the first time through the recently discovered work of Hippolytus. The Judaizing teachers, of whom we read so much in the writings of Paul, appear, at this crisis, to have gathered strength, and to have departed still more widely from gospel truth. Combining the doctrines of the Gentile philosophy with the cabalistic Judaism of Asia and Alexandria, and forming themselves on the system of Simon Magus, to whom reference has been already made, they branched out into many varieties of sects, all agreeing, however, in exhibiting the Gnostic form of error. This doctrine, originally derived from Babylon, and afterwards upheld by the Persian sage, Zoroaster, taught, as its leading feature, the creation of the world by inferior beings; asserted the inferiority of Christ to the Father; and denied the reality of the incarnation. Among the varieties distinguished by Hippolytus are the

*Naasenes* or *Ophites*, who held that the serpent of the fall was the Logos and the true God, and named themselves after him (*naas* being the Hebrew word for a serpent). They avowed themselves Gnostics, professing that they alone understood "the depths" (τα βαθη);* and they worshipped "the man from above," whom they called "Adamas," and whom they celebrated in various and elaborate hymns, after this fashion: "O most glorious man, from whom is the father, and by whom the mother, the two immortal names, the progeny of Œons, the orders of heaven!" Hippolytus adds: "They divide him, like Geryon, into three parts," — spirit, soul, matter, — all uniting in one man, the son of Mary; and they declare that this doctrine was delivered to them by Mariamne, who received it from John, our Lord's brother.† Their system was obscene and licentious.

Similar to these were the *Peratics*, who derived their origin from Ademes, the Charystian, and Euphrates, the Peratic‡ (supposed by Neander to have lived before Christ, though this is clearly an error). They constituted a variety of the Ophites,§ holding a system full of astrology and Gnosticism, in which the Son or the Serpent, moving between the Father and matter, turns alternately to the former to receive, and to the latter to impart, divine powers; whilst the leading features of Jewish history are artfully woven into an allegorical system, to suit the leading notion.

Another variety was the *Sethiani*, also serpent-worshippers, who declared that Moses adopted their doctrine when he spoke

* The allusion to these in the address to the church of Thyatira is evident: οἵτινες οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τὰ βαθέα τοῦ Σατανᾶ ὡς λέγουσιν, — "who have not *known* (alluding to the γνωσις) the *depths* of Satan, — as the phrase is." Rev. 2 : 24.

† Hippolyt., p. 95.

‡ Probably Euphrates was a Eubœan. The Chevalier Bunsen derives his name from ἡ πέραν, the country beyond the sea; for so was Eubœa relatively to Asia Minor. Bunsen's Hippolytus, i. 37.

§ Some valuable remarks on this and the other sects are contained in Cooper's Free Church of Ancient Christendom, p. 194, *et seq.*

of "blackness, and darkness and tempest."* These, they say, are the three Logoses. In Paradise they were called Adam, Eve, the Serpent; then Cain, Abel, and Seth; then Abraham, Isaac, Jacob; they were indicated by the three days which passed before the sun and the moon were created; and they answered to the three laws, — the temporary, the positive, and the moral laws. The system exhibited its so-called truth in connection with heathen mythology, and with the mysteries of Eleusis.†

Another subdivision was the *Justinians*, named after one Justin, author of "the book of Baruch," discoverer of "what eye had not seen, nor ear heard, neither had entered into the heart of man," as he blasphemously professed. This sect adopted a system of angelic derivation from two principles, male and female, Elohim and Edem, — a feature of Simon's doctrine, which appears to have been often repeated in these abominable heresies, — Elohim representing the spirit, and Edem the soul (the last identical with Aphrodite, or Venus). The incarnation is thus represented:

"At last, in the days of Herod the king, Baruch‡ is sent, being himself commissioned by Elohim, and, coming to Nazareth, finds Jesus, the son of Joseph and Mary, feeding sheep, being a child twelve years old, and delivers to him the commands of Elohim and Edem, and says: 'All the prophets before thee have followed in my train. Be persuaded, therefore, O Jesus, the son of man, not to refuse to follow, but deliver the doctrine to men, and tell them the truths of the Father and of heaven, and ascend up into heaven, and sit down there by the side of Elohim, the father of us all.' And Jesus heard the angel, and

* Heb. 12 : 18. Are the words those of Moses?

† Hippolytus, pp. 143, 144. *Ibid.*, p. 157.

‡ In these fables it appears not to have been unusual to represent names eminent in Jewish history as the incarnations of powerful spirits. Another Jewish writing, quoted by Neander, speaks in a similar way of προευχη Ιωσηφ.

said, 'Lord, I will do all these things;' and he taught the message. But the Serpent desired to draw him away; yet he remained faithful to Baruch. Therefore, the Serpent being angry because he could not draw him away, caused him to be crucified," &c. &c. In these systems the Demi-urge, or creator of the world, Jehovah, is usually represented as the evil principle. The followers of this sect took a stringent oath on their admission; the same, they said, which Elohim swore when he entered heaven, according to the passage, "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent." *

To these heresies we must add another variety, that of *Cerinthus* (no myth, as some have supposed, but, like the others, a real personage). This man was an Asiatic Jew, who inculcated the observances of the law of Moses, but taught the following doctrine: — That the world was not made by the primal divinity, but by a separate and distinct power, ignorant of that original essence. That Jesus was the true son of Joseph and Mary, and that, on his baptism, Christ, an emanation of that power which is above all other powers, descended on him in the form of a dove, and that then he inculcated the knowledge of the Father, and all other virtues; but that at last Christ flew away from Jesus, who suffered, and rose from the dead. Christ was thus always above suffering, — a mere spiritual existence.†

How much of these systems had become developed when John took up his residence at Ephesus is not clearly apparent. But his writings contain constant allusions to such tenets as having existed before him; and the work of Hippolytus, which places the sects we have named at the commencement of his list of heretics, assures us of their antiquity.

Till after the accession of Domitian (A. D. 81) no fresh persecution appears to have befallen the early Christians. The munificent reign of Vespasian, which was succeeded by the

* Psalm cx. † Iren., i. 25. Hippolyt., x. 21.

government of his son, Titus, — perhaps the most able ruler who ever assumed the imperial purple, — had left the Christians to follow their religion with impunity. But the accession of Domitian — one of the most brutal and craven-spirited tyrants who ever sat upon the throne, and whose wife, Domitia, was his personified evil spirit — commenced, according to Eusebius, a fierce crusade against the unoffending Christians.* It is probable, though not precisely certain, that by his orders John was banished to Patmos, one of the islands called Sporades, in the Ægean Sea. Certain it is that the early traditions of the Asiatic churches describe John as a martyr to the faith of Christ. It was while banished to this island that the apostle wrote, from immediate revelation, the mysterious yet sublime book called the Apocalypse, the early part of which describes, in a manner too remarkably precise not to be authentic, the erroneous doctrines and vitiated practice of the Asiatic churches, especially in relation to the heresies we have just described. After his banishment John appears to have returned to Ephesus; and the following traditions recorded of him are not unworthy of being related: — On one occasion, when the apostle was about to bathe in a public bath, he found that Cerinthus was there before him.† On hearing this, John hastily retired from the spot, declaring his apprehension that the house would fall in ruins, since the enemy of the truth was there. Tertullian informs us that the same apostle had been plunged in hot oil (probably at the time of Domitian's persecution) without injury!

An anecdote, related by Eusebius of John, beautifully illustrates the temper and fidelity of this friend of his Lord.‡ After his return to Ephesus, he frequently visited the neighboring churches, appointing bishops and forming Christian societies

* Euseb., i. ii. iii. c. 17. † Iren., Euseb.

‡ Eusebius calls this "no fiction, but a real history." Does he by this imply that the other stories related by him of the same apostle rest on less sufficient evidence?

under divine direction. On one occasion, observing a youth of very prepossessing appearance among the Christians whom he addressed, he singled him out from the rest, and, turning to the bishop of the church, said: "I commend this young man to you very earnestly in the presence of the church of Christ." The bishop undertook the charge, and John, having completed his visit, returned to Ephesus. The youth was instructed, encouraged, and at length baptized; and the presbyter, supposing him safe, ceased to exercise over him his former care. Deprived of this superintendence, the young Christian became gradually surrounded by profligate companions, and enticed into expensive entertainments, and even began to plunder, till at length he formed with his associates in sin a band of robbers. Some time passed, and on one occasion the apostle was again sent for, to pay a visit to the same church. When the business was completed, John said, "Come, bishop, return me the deposit committed to thee by myself and Christ, in the presence of the church over which thou presidest." The presbyter was at some loss to determine the meaning of the apostle, till John said: "I demand the young man, and the soul of a brother." Groaning heavily, the bishop said, "He is dead, — dead to God!" and related his fearful history. On this the apostle beat his head and tore his garment, and immediately demanded a horse. He rode instantly into the country, where he was soon seized by the robbers, when he demanded to be conducted to their captain. As soon as the chief saw the venerable old man he was covered with confusion, and attempted to fly. But John called to him: "Why dost thou fly, my son, from thy unarmed father? Have compassion on me; fear not. There is still hope for thee. I will pray to Christ for thee. Should it be necessary, I will suffer death for thee, as Christ did for us. I will give my life for thine." The appeal was resistless; the young man hesitated, threw away his arms, wept, embraced the old man, and was conducted back into the church. Nor did the apostle cease his labors till his convert gave the most

decisive signs of repentance, and was restored to the communion of his fellow-Christians. This anecdote exhibits in its most striking light the simplicity and energy of the holy apostle, and the earnest spirit of the primitive church.

To correct the numerous and deadly errors which abounded on every hand around him, John compiled — probably towards the end of his ministry — the gospel which bears his name. The facts of our Lord's life, as related by the other evangelists, were now admitted; the peculiarity of the age of John was the manner in which the false teachers grouped them together, and the use they made of them. The words and doctrine of Christ, as delivered by himself, were therefore of the utmost value for the purpose of refuting and dispersing these evil influences. John prepared, accordingly, to give to the world a fourth gospel, in which a prominent place should be given to the teachings of our Lord; and for this task the apostle who had been the intimate friend of Jesus, and who by mental constitution was singularly capable of grasping the prominent principles — the philosophy, in short — of his Master's instruction, was singularly qualified. Availing himself, therefore, of the prominent terms of the Gnostic heretics, his endeavor has been to introduce into his gospel those declarations of our Lord, and those expositions of his truth, which might best countervail them. Every reader of this production is already familiar with the key-notes of his system; and those who remember the Gnostic sentiments will perceive with what propriety he introduces the terms Father, First-begotten, Fulness, Word, Truth, Light, Life, Man, Church. It is the object of the apostle to show that the Logos is not an Œon, issuing from the fountain, — the fulness of the Godhead, — but God himself; that the Logos was not made nor derived; that the Logos was the creator of all things; that the Logos took upon him a real human nature. These and similar propositions are illustrated continually by the language and teachings of Christ himself. Our limits forbid us to illus-

trate these propositions in detail, but the reader will have no difficulty in tracing them for himself.

A similar reference pervades the "Circular Pastoral Letter," as Neander appropriately terms it, which John addressed to the churches by which he was surrounded. The declarations that Jesus was the Light, the Truth, the Life, — the reference to the many Antichrists who confessed not that Jesus was come in the flesh, and the stringent admonitions against the un-apostolic and immoral influence of the popular systems, — are in strict accordance with the conditions under which it appears this important epistle was written. Similar admonitions pervade the second epistle, addressed to a Christian lady; and the third, in which Diotrephes* is made the subject of a special mention, seems to be directed against one who stood at the head of a body, perhaps influenced by Gnostic views, and seeking, by proclaiming them, to lessen the legitimate influence of an apostle of Christ.

Jerome relates that when this apostle had lived to extreme old age, and had scarcely power even to extend his hands in the Christian assemblies, or to utter a whole sentence, he was accustomed to be brought into the midst of the church, and to address the disciples in no other words than these, "Little children, love one another!" Hearing the same words so constantly repeated, one of the disciples at length said, "Master, why dost thou always say the same things?" To which John answered, "Because it is a divine command; and if it be obeyed it is enough."†

* From this passage Rothe derives the singular argument, that as none but a prelate could have stood in a position to cast men out of the church, Diotrephes must have held that office, however unworthily; and he thus argues for the existence of episcopacy in the apostolical age. If, however, the position which Diotrephes possessed was such as to expose him to the scorn of a man so venerable as John, and of an apostle besides, the argument would seem to resemble one of those hand-grenades which explode in the hands of the assailant. *Valeat quantum!*

† This beautiful story of John's "pious tautology" is related by Jerome, on Gal. vi.

At length this venerable servant of God died, full of years and of divine honors, and was buried at Ephesus.* He who had rested on the bosom of his Lord as his familiar friend — to whom the care of the mother of Jesus had been specially committed by her dying son — who had outlived all the other apostles of Christ, and was spared to introduce religion into the following century — received the crown of his labors and the reward of his sufferings. We need not trust the unworthy legends which speak of miracles performed by the dust which was carried away from his tomb.

We are naturally inclined to inquire whether any records exist of Mary, the mother of Jesus, after the crucifixion. The answer is decisive: none of any historical authority. Silence on the subject is maintained by all writers until the sixth or seventh century. Nor is it known whether she accompanied John to Ephesus, or died at Jerusalem, unless we credit writers who lived at the same distance of time from the supposed events. The Catholic story of the Assumption rests on the belief of Epiphanius, who does not record it as a fact, but only says that he durst not affirm her death, because there was no record of it, and because she might have been taken to heaven without death; and Catholic writers of authority declare that the Assumption, though celebrated by their church on the 15th of August, is not an article of faith as to the point whether the Virgin was taken to heaven in the body or out of it.† This is a sample of the rest.

It is probable that towards the close of this century the gospel had reached the shores of Britain, though by what precise means we are not informed.

* Polycrates, apud Euseb., iii. c. 31.

† See Butler's Lives of Saints.

CORINTH.

## CHAPTER V.

### CORINTH AND THE CORINTHIAN CHRISTIANS.

We have hitherto had little opportunity of tracing the first fruits of the gospel in Greece. It is important to our object that we shall endeavor to do so. Nor is there any point from which we can more advantageously survey its progress than from Corinth, to which the apostle Paul addressed two of his most valuable epistles.

The city of Corinth possessed every advantage for the commerce which rendered it celebrated. It was built on the isthmus which separated the Peloponnesus from Northern Greece. It was thus at the head of two extensive bays, — the Saronic Gulf (now the Gulf of Egina) running eastward towards the Ægean Sea, and defended from the violence of the ocean by the island of Ægina, which operated as a kind of breakwater,

and terminated in the Gulf of Cenchræa; — and the Corinthian Gulf (now the Gulf of Lepanto), running westward, a part of which, at present called the Bay of Corinth, formed a second enclosure within it. It had thus every advantage of sea communication with both the eastern and western parts of the Mediterranean, whilst, from the narrowness of the isthmus on which it stood, all the land traffic from the southern to the northern regions of Greece must of necessity pass by it. To avoid the stormy passage around the Peloponnesus, it was usual to transport the traffic from the east to the west, or the contrary, by drawing the loaded galleys four or five miles across this neck of land. The city stood contiguous to a rich and luxuriant plain, and was backed by a hoary mountain, two thousand feet in height, termed the Acrocorinthus,— "the Gibraltar of Greece,"— from the summit of which an unrivalled landscape still extends on every hand. No situation can be more lovely, none better suited by nature for commerce. But the glory of Corinth, as a city, is departed, and a few straggling huts alone remain, to tell of the colonies she once sent forth to Sicily and the west, — of the Achæan League which acknowledged it as its centre, — of the pacific influence she exerted amidst the rivalry and contentions of the surrounding kingdoms, or of the temptation presented by her wealth and prestige to the ambition of the warlike Romans.

When the gospel history began, Corinth was a newly rebuilt city, having been destroyed by Lucius Mummius, and reërected by Julius Cæsar, who re-peopled it. As a dependent on Rome, it became the seat of proconsular government for Achaia, or Southern Greece. It had undergone, indeed, many changes since Cicero designated it, in reference to its learning, the "Eye of all Greece;"* and had been celebrated over the world for its sumptuous temples, its invention of a peculiar style of architecture, and the sensual delights which attracted visitors from

* Pro Lege Manilia, c. v.

all quarters; but at the time of which we write, it had regained almost all its ancient renown. It had again, doubtless, its temples dedicated to the sun, to Apollo, to Jupiter, to Minerva, and, not least, to Aphrodite (Venus), which last inundated the whole district with corruption and licentiousness. But it was principally distinguished by its public games, called, from their locality, the Isthmian games, held in honor of Neptune (Poseidon), and constituting one of the four great Greek festivals celebrated at Corinth every third year. These resembled their Olympic rivals, and consisted of boxing, wrestling, and racing on horses or in chariots, accompanied by contests in music and poetry. At a somewhat later period contests with wild beasts were superadded. The glory of the victors in these encounters was very great, and extended to the family and town to which they belonged, though the actual prize was only a garland of pine-leaves, or a wreath of ivy. By a law of Solon, each Athenian who proved the conqueror was entitled to a hundred drachmæ.*

When, from the Acropolis at Corinth, the eye ranges over the expanse of sea and shore which stretches beneath the view, Athens, lying behind the island of Salamis, and backed by the range of the Hymettus, is distinctly in view. The two cities had much in common, and were often associated with each other in the page which records the fortunes of Greece, and in the history of the labors and trials of early Christianity. Divided only by the Gulf of Salamis, a short journey would land one at the Piræus, the port of that celebrated city. It may be readily imagined, therefore, that Corinth and Athens sympathized much with each other, and that many of the views and errors which belonged to the one city would be transported to and reflected by its neighbor.

The gospel had been first proclaimed in Corinth, as we have seen, by the ministrations of the apostle Paul, during his sec-

* Smith's Classical Dictionary.

ond missionary journey. As Corinth was at once highly remarkable for literature, and extremely addicted to sensuality, both causes combined to create difficulties in the way of his energetic ministrations. They had been received with opposition both from the Jew and the Greek.

When, at a subsequent period, Paul was residing in Ephesus, intelligence was brought to him, by some of the family of Chloe, respecting the state of affairs in the church at Corinth, which created no small solicitude respecting their welfare and progress. Parties had been formed opposing each other with a bitter rivalry. In their disputes, some pleaded the authority of Paul, as the minister from whom they had first received the truth; others that of Apollos, not because he taught doctrines different from those of Paul, but because they so misconceived his meaning; others that of Peter, who was probably in favor with the Jewish party, because of his prejudices in favor of circumcision; whilst others prided themselves on owning no human name, but on being simply the disciples of the Master himself. There had occurred, besides, grievous cases of immorality and disorder, tending to unloose the whole frame-work of Christian society, by bringing scandals on the Christian name. Professors of religion had joined in idol feasts; the observance of the Lord's Supper had in some cases degenerated into a scene of riot and disorder, and the spiritual gift had become profaned and abused. To remedy these enormous evils, the apostle addressed to them his first epistle; most kindly remonstrating with them on their errors, and attempting to lead them back to their faith in Christ. After sending the missive, he sent Timothy and Erastus through Macedonia to Corinth, and afterwards despatched Titus to report to him the reception of his letter. He expected to meet Titus* at Troas, and was greatly dis-

* Paul writes to Timothy, later (2 Tim. 4 : 10), that Titus had departed to preach the gospel in Dalmatia. The Romish Church preserves a legend, of little authority, that his first convert in that quarter was St. Dominus, who was ordained by Titus Bishop of Salona, then the metropolis — afterwards changed to Spalatia.

turbed at not finding him; but afterwards met him in Macedonia, receiving from him there the intelligence he so much desired: and, on the basis of the information thus conveyed, addressed to them another epistle, in which he returns thanks to God for their improved prospects, and the manner in which they had excommunicated the incestuous person to whom his first letter had made such reference, and also for their attempts to rescue his character from misapprehension and perversion. He especially commends the liberality they had shown towards the distressed Christians of Judea. Shortly afterwards, Paul again visited Corinth in person, and remained there for three months, departing thence to take his journey to Jerusalem, by Miletus. We have no further account of Corinth in the New Testament.

There exist, however, two epistles, purporting to be the epistles of Clement to the Corinthians, by which further light is afforded. In his letter to the Philippians, the apostle Paul has made mention of "Clement also, and others my fellow-laborers, whose names are in the book of life." Two epistles have reached us, the second in a very imperfect state, not improbably written by this pious man, bearing respectively the titles of the first and second epistles* to the Corinthians.† These writings render it evident that the distractions of that church were renewed, and that some of its presbyters had been unrighteously degraded from the office they had held. The writer mentions the fact that he had been appealed to for advice on the disputed subjects; explaining that the calamities and trials which had oppressed him and his fellow-Christians had rendered it impossible to write to them at an earlier period.

* Eusebius, book III. c. xxxvii., expressly states that this second epistle — fragments of which only now remain — was not regarded as of equal authority with the first.

† The first epistle is, in all probability, the oldest existing specimen of what are called "the Apostolical Fathers." The so-called Epistle of Barnabas, if it be the production of any Barnabas, can scarcely be admitted to belong to the devoted companion of Paul.

The picture which he gives of a former state of things in the church at Corinth proves that the apostolical admonitions to them had not been in vain.

"For who," says he, "that sojourned among you did not approve your faith, so full of all virtue and so well grounded? Who did not admire your modesty and becoming piety? Who has not made known the magnificence of your hospitality? Who has not blessed your complete and sound knowledge? For you did all things without respect of persons: you walked in the law of God; you were obedient to those who were set over you; the young gave honor to their elders; you instructed the juniors to think moderately and honorably; you taught the women to fulfil their duties in a blameless, holy, and chaste conversation, loving their husbands in all dutifulness, administering the affairs of their households according to the rule of well-regulated obedience, and conducting themselves with modesty in all their actions. All of you were humble; none was vain-glorious; you were more ready to obey than to be obeyed; ready to give rather than to receive; you were contented with the provision God had made for you, and were eager listeners to his word; your hearts were enlarged towards him, and his sufferings were before your eyes. Thus approved and enlarged peace was given you, possessed of an insatiable desire to do good; and a plenteous effusion of the Holy Spirit was upon you all. Full of holy desires, you stretched out your hands in alacrity and confidence to the omnipotent God; entreating him to pardon you if in any respect you had sinned undesignedly. Your daily and nightly solicitude was for the whole brotherhood, that the number of God's elect might be saved in mercy and a good conscience. You were sincere and simple, and mutually unmindful of injuries. All disorder and all schism was abominable to you; you mourned over the faults of your neighbors; you regarded their faults as your own; you repented of no good actions, but were ready to every good work; adorned with a conversation admirable and full of wisdom, you performed all

things in God's fear, and the commandments of God were written on the tables of your hearts."

These sentences exhibit the truly practical nature of genuine Christianity, and admirably illustrate the simplicity and energy of the piety of the first century. But the church of Corinth was not always thus, and Clement proceeds to show how defalcation has succeeded to prosperity. "Hence have arisen envy, and discord, and sedition against the wise, the young, and the old. Justice and peace have departed; we have forsaken the fear of God, and become blinded to the faith; nor do they walk in his commandments, nor honor Christ by their practice; each one follows his own desires, yielding to that wicked and impious spirit of envy by which death first entered the world."*

Various exhortations to unity make up the substance of this epistle, somewhat confusedly illustrated by examples derived from the Old Testament writings and elsewhere. Yet, interspersed with these scriptural sentiments, are others exhibiting the latent germs of errors which afterwards inundated the church. Such are those passages in which, with a wide deviation from any examples in the New Testament, the writer presents a labored parallel between the Jewish system, in which all the offices of the priesthood were under subjection to the High Priest, and the system of ecclesiastical polity then beginning to be in vogue.

"For they who present their oblations at the specified times are accepted and blessed; for those who follow the laws of the Lord cannot err. For every office was subject to the High Priest; each priest had his assigned place, and the Levites their especial ministry, whilst the laic was bound by the laws of the laity. Let each one of you, brethren, give thanks to God in his proper station, living in a good conscience, not dishonestly passing out of the prescribed rule of his office. The continual, or votive, or sin offerings, are not offered in every place, but

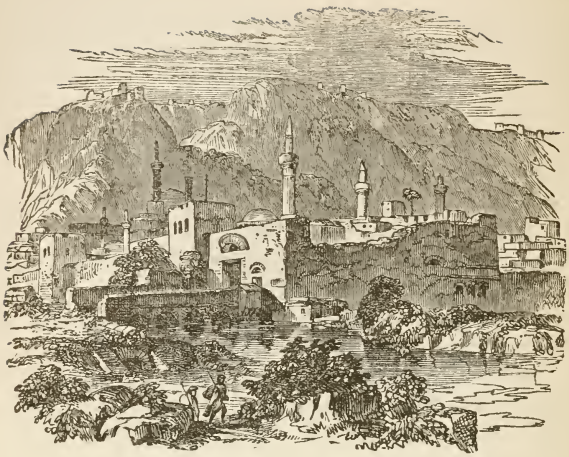
* Clementis Epis. 1 ad Corinthios, § 1, 26.

only at Jerusalem; and even there, the offerings are not made indiscriminately, but only at the altar in the Temple, the inspection and approbation of the sacrifice being first made by the High Priest and the constituted officers, and they who do anything in opposition to their will are punished with death. You see this, brethren, and by how much we are in advance of them in knowledge, by so much are we exposed to greater peril." If such passages as these do not justify the suspicions of some of the most learned commentators, that they are the interpolations of a later age, they demonstrate that the leaven of ecclesiastical assumption had begun already to affect the church. Yet the writer immediately subjoins:* "The first preachers appointed bishops and deacons from among them, who were worthy of trust. Nor was this new, for in ancient times scripture spoke of bishops and deacons. For in a certain place the scripture saith, 'I will appoint their bishops in righteousness, and their deacons in faith.'"† (There were then at that time only two orders.)

* "And our apostles knew by our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be a future contention respecting the name of Bishop. For this reason, therefore, having received a complete foreknowledge, they appointed the forenamed" (bishops and deacons), "and in the mean time gave them the pasturage" (or, as Hefele conjectures, "the precept"), "that when they had departed, other approved men should succeed to their ministry." The conjecture of Rothe, who renders the term ἐπινομος "testamentary precept," to uphold the favorite prelatical system, is altogether gratuitous.* The attempt is as ill-contrived as that of Dr. Hammond and others, who would prove from Titus 1 : 5 the apostolical institution of Archbishops.

† Epis. ad. Cor. I. § 43.

* Ibid. § 45



ANTIOCH.

## CHAPTER VI.

### ANTIOCH AND IGNATIUS.

In the course of the preceding pages we have frequently had occasion to mention the name of Antioch. Two cities anciently answered to that appellative. One of these was in Pisidia, and, as the seat of the proconsular government in those regions, frequently occurs on the page of history. But the greater Antioch, the capital of Syria and of the Roman provinces in Asia, occupies a place of the utmost notoriety. This "Queen of the East" was situated on the Orontes, about twenty-three miles from the sea, the river being once navigable as far as the city, having Seleucia as its port, at the entrance of the river. It was built by Seleucus Nicanor, receiving its name from his.

After Antiochus, and under the imperial dynasty, it held the third place among the capital cities, scarcely yielding the palm to Alexandria itself. Built in the valley of the Orontes, the luxuriance and picturesqueness are proverbial, and above Mount Cassius, the last of the ridge of Lebanon, rises up to a commanding height. The bed of the roaring river is overhung by the richest variety of foliage; myrtle, laurel, arbutus, mingling their foliage with broken ground and red and rocky precipices. Originally it was surrounded with walls of great strength, which surmounted the tops of the adjoining hills, and were carried by architectural skill across the intervening declivities. The festivals, games, and luxuries for which Antioch was celebrated, rendered it a favorite retreat of the richer Roman citizens, and several emperors made it their place of frequent resort. Among its attractions were the voluptuous groves of Daphne, planted by Seleucus, and abounding in natural fountains, the attractions of which were a source of corruption to Roman commanders. The walls of the city may be yet distinctly traced, and several portions of them remain almost entire, climbing with daring masonry heights almost perpendicular. But frequent earthquakes, and the surer dissolution of time itself, have done their work upon this ancient city, and the modern Antakia occupies only a fifth of the extent of its celebrated predecessor, and presents none of its grandeur to the inspection of the traveller.

The population of ancient Antioch was exceedingly large. Even in the time of Chrysostom it numbered two hundred thousand. At an earlier period it was even more considerable, as may be inferred from the fact that, one hundred and fifty years after its erection, one hundred thousand Jews were slain in it during one week.

The labors of Paul and Barnabas have been already related in connection with the church at Antioch, which had learned the Christian faith from those disciples of Christ who were scattered abroad at the time of Stephen's persecution. It has been seen

also how this church was eminent for its missionary labors. The name of Christian (often employed without the corresponding designation, but venerable when indicating what it truly represents) was first given to the disciples in this city, whether as a term of reproach, or assumed by themselves, is not known. In this church also had arisen the disputes about circumcision, afterwards so happily settled at Jerusalem. Antioch was, moreover, the birthplace of Luke, by whom the record of the apostles was given.

The imperial purple was worn at the beginning of the second century by Trajan. He succeeded Nerva A. D. 98, and was the first Roman emperor who was a native of Italy. He possessed the qualities which usually distinguish a man of severe temperament early trained to the service of war. The peace in which the church had been permitted to rest during the reign of Nerva had greatly increased its numbers, and it now presented a form calculated to awaken the suspicions of the Roman power. Certain it is that Trajan indulged a bitter prejudice against the followers of Christ, and scarcely was he settled on the throne when a bloody persecution commenced. Up to this time no definite edict had been issued against the Christians; they had been proceeded against, if at all, as enemies to human nature in general, and dangerous to the Roman government in particular. The prevailing sentiment doubtless was, that "the gods should be by all means honored, according to the customs of the country; and that those who did not should be forced so to honor them; and that such persons as were forever introducing something novel in religion should be hated and punished, not only because of the gods, but because they who introduce new divinities mislead others into receiving foreign laws, the secret source of conspiracies and secret risings, which are dangerous above all things to the monarchy." *

About the year 110 the younger Pliny was appointed pro-

* Dio Cassius, Mæcenas.

consul to Bithynia and Pontus, where he found the Christians to exist in numbers. Naturally humane and upright, he was greatly at a loss as to the course he ought to adopt in reference to the new religion, the principles of which were evidently far beyond the reach of his unspiritual understanding, On this subject he wrote a letter to the Emperor Trajan, asking for further directions, stating the case as he had apprehended it. Though often quoted, the letter must by no means be omitted, as it illustrates the feeling with which pagans in power regarded a system so perplexing to the heathen mind.

PLINY TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

"It is a rule, sir, which I inviolably observe, to refer myself to you in all my doubts; for who is more capable of removing my scruples and informing my ignorance? Having never been present at any trials of those who profess Christianity, I am unacquainted not only with the nature of their crimes or the measure of their punishments, but how far it is proper to enter into an inquiry after them. Whether, therefore, any difference is usually made with respect to the ages of the guilty, or whether any distinction should be made between the young and old, the tender and the robust; whether any room should be given for repentance, or the guilt of Christianity once incurred is not to be expiated by the most unequivocal retractation; whether the name itself, unconnected with any flagitiousness of conduct, or the crimes connected with the name, be the object of punishment. In the mean time this has been my method with respect to those who have been brought before me as Christians. I asked them whether they were Christians; if they pleaded guilty, I interrogated them twice afresh, with a menace of capital punishment. In case of obstinate perseverance, I ordered them to be executed. For of this I had no doubt, whatever the nature of their religion, that a sullen inflexibility called for the vengeance of the magistrate. Some were infected with the same madness, whom, on account of their privilege of citizen-

ship, I reserved to be sent to Rome, to be referred to your tribunal. In the course of this business information pouring in that they were encouraged, more cases occurred. An anonymous libel was exhibited, with a catalogue of names of persons who declared that they were not Christians then, nor ever had been; and they repeated after me an invocation of the gods and of your image, which for this purpose I had ordered to be brought with the images of the deities. They performed sacred rites with wine and frankincense, and execrated Christ; none of which things, I am told, a real Christian would ever be compelled to do. On this account I dismissed them. Others, named by an informer, declared that they had forsaken that error three or four years, others still longer, — even twenty years ago. All of them worshipped your image and the statues of the gods, and also execrated Christ. And this was the account which they gave of the nature of the religion they once had professed, whether it deserves the name of crime or error, namely, that they were accustomed on a stated day to meet before daylight, and to repeat amongst themselves a hymn to Christ as to a god, and to bind themselves with an oath, by an obligation of not committing any wickedness, but, on the contrary, of abstaining from theft, robberies and adulteries; also of not violating their promise or denying a pledge; after which it was their custom to separate, and to meet again at a promiscuous, harmless meal; from which last practice, however, they desisted after the publication of my edict, in which, agreeably to your orders, I forbade any societies of that sort; on which account I judged it the more necessary to inquire, by torture, from two females, who were said to be deaconesses, what is the real truth. But nothing could I collect except a depraved and excessive superstition. Deferring, therefore, any further investigation, I determined to consult you; for the number of culprits is so great as to call for serious consultation. Many persons are informed against of every age and of both sexes; and more still will be in the same situation. The contagion of

the superstition hath spread not only through cities, but even villages and the country. Not that I think it impossible to check and correct it: the success of my endeavors hitherto forbids such desponding thoughts; for the temples, once almost desolate, begin to be frequented, and the sacred solemnities, which had long been intermitted, are now attended afresh, and the sacrificial victims are now sold everywhere, which once could scarcely find a purchaser; whence I conclude that many might be reclaimed, were the hope of impunity on repentance absolutely confirmed."

### Trajan to Pliny.

"You have done perfectly right, my dear Pliny, in the inquiry which you have made concerning Christians. For truly no one general rule can be laid down which will apply itself to all cases. These people must not be sought after. If they are brought before you, and convicted, let them be capitally punished; yet, with this restriction, that if any one renounce Christianity and show his sincerity by supplicating our gods, however suspected he may be for the past, he shall obtain pardon for the future, on his repentance. But anonymous libels in no case ought to be attended to, for the precedent would be of the worst sort, and perfectly incongruous to the maxims of government."

The answer of Trajan might pass for an example of moderation in the eyes of pagans, though it displays no desire of information respecting the Christian tenets, nor any reasons for the course he is pleased to enjoin. It is a distinguished illustration of the clemency of despotism.*

* "O sentence necessarily inconsistent! he denies that inquiry should be made concerning them, as if they were innocent, and commands them to be punished, as if they were guilty; he spares them, and is enraged with them; he dissembles, and blames them. Why dost thou lay thyself open to such censure? If thou condemnest, why not inquire? If thou dost not inquire, why dost thou not absolve?" — Tertullian, Apol. § 2.

Towards the close of the year 106, Trajan journeyed to the East, to make war upon the Parthians, at that time the only formidable rivals to the imperial government. After their conquest he came from Seleucia to Antioch. If there be any credit due to the "Acts of the Martyrdom of Saint Ignatius," believed by the best authorities to be both genuine and authentic,* some memorable occurrences took place during the imperial visit.

Before entering on these, however, it is to be observed that Ignatius was at this time the bishop of the church at Antioch. Contradictory accounts prevail respecting his appointment: according to Chrysostom, he was designated by Peter himself to be his successor; according to Eusebius, Evodius filled the office immediately, and Ignatius followed him. If, however, as is probable, a plurality of bishops existed in the church at Antioch, Ignatius and Evodius may have held office contemporaneously.† Chrysostom speaks rapturously of the manner in which the duties of his office were fulfilled by Ignatius during forty years, and tells us that when, after the death of Domitian, the storm of persecution became lulled, the bishop — whose daily preaching, fasting and prayers, were remarkable — feared that he had not been distinguished by adequate love for Christ, seeing that he had not been thought worthy of the crown of martyrdom. When Trajan visited Antioch, flushed with victory, and bent on the subjection of the Christians as well as his other enemies, and having threatened a persecution unless these Christians would acknowledge, like other subject nations, the laws of Rome, he compelled all who lived in the practice of the Christian religion either to sacrifice or die. Ignatius, then distinguished by the name Theophorus, — "God-bearer," one who has God in his heart, answering to the Greek word "Christopher," — presented himself to be led before the emperor, that by his own self-sacrifice he might screen his beloved flock.

* See Hefele's Pat. Apos. op. Prolegom.

† Smith's Dictionary, "Ignatius."

Being introduced to Trajan, that monarch said, "Who art thou, wicked demon, who art so precipitate and hasty in transgressing our orders, and persuadest others also to perish miserably?"

Ignatius: "None can call Theophorus a wicked demon, for demons have widely departed from the service of God. But if you so call me because I am an enemy to demons, I confess the charge. For, holding Christ to be the heavenly King, I dissolve their enchantments."

Trajan: "And who is Theophorus?"

Ignatius: "He who has Christ in his heart."

Trajan: "Dost thou not think then that *we* have the gods in our minds when we use them as our allies against our enemies?"

Ignatius: "Thou errest in calling the heathen demons gods; for there is one God, who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them, and one Jesus Christ, the only-begotten son of God, whose kingdom may I obtain!"

Trajan: "Dost thou speak of him who was crucified before Pontius Pilate?"

Ignatius: "I speak of him who bore my sin on the cross with its author, and, condemning all the error of demons and all wickedness, put them under the feet of those who carry him in their heart."

Trajan: "Dost thou then bear the crucified within thyself?"

Ignatius: "I do; for it is written, 'I will dwell in them and walk in them.'"

The emperor then maliciously gave this sentence:

"Since Ignatius has declared that he bears the crucified in himself, we order that he shall be carried bound by soldiers to great Rome, to be food for beasts and a spectacle for the people."

Ignatius: "I thank thee, Lord, that thou countest me worthy to honor thee in perfect love to thee, and hast thrown me in iron chains like thine apostle Paul!"

The narrative continues: "And having said these things, with great joy he received the bonds upon him; and prayed,

first for the church, and commended it with many tears to God; imitating his Lord in this, that, like a notable ram of a good flock, he went at the head of it." *

Ignatius, bound in chains, was embarked (together with a band of soldiers as his guard) at Seleucia, the port of Antioch, for Rome. Chrysostom imagined that the route he is represented to have taken was intended to try his firmness for his approaching martyrdom.† During his voyage he appears to have touched at Ephesus, at which place the church sent their bishop, Onesimus, to sympathize with him in his affliction. Journeying from Ephesus to Smyrna, Ignatius met, at the latter place, Polycarp, bishop of the church in that city (vaguely said to have been his fellow-disciple at the feet of John, but evidently a much younger man). "The age and character of the holy Bishop of Antioch, and the circumstance of his being then on his way to receive the crown of martyrdom, after the good confession of faith which he had witnessed before the Emperor Trajan, would necessarily cause a grave veneration for him in the minds of all the Christians at Smyrna, and consequently dispose them to give the deepest and most serious attention to any word of exhortation and advice which he might offer to them. The close state of restraint under which he was held by the soldiers who had the custody of him would probably have prevented him from being able to give personally, or by word of mouth, any admonition or instruction to the church at Smyrna; and Polycarp, anxious that both himself and his flock might have the benefit of his parting advice, and perhaps, also, desirous that his own teaching might be upheld by the authority of so venerable and holy a servant of Christ, might have urged

* Cureton's "Corpus Ignatianum," pp. 190, 191. Unsatisfactory as conclusions derived from internal evidence usually are, they have proved, in the case of Ignatius' remains, perfectly prophetic. No author has been more unscrupulously used than the holy Ignatius in support of the cause of prelacy.

† Chrys. Hom., in St. Ignat. Martyrium.

a request to Ignatius, the result of which is the letter before us." *

"Ignatius, who is Theophorus, to Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who himself rather is visited by God the Father, and by Jesus Christ our Lord, much peace.†

"Forasmuch as my mind, which is confirmed in God as upon a rock immovable, is accepted to me, I praise God the more abundantly for having been accounted worthy of thy countenance, which I long for in God. I beseech thee, therefore, by the grace with which thou art clothed, to add to thy course, and pray for all men that they may be saved, and require things becoming with all diligence of flesh and of spirit. Be careful for unanimity, than which nothing is more excellent. Bear all men as our Lord beareth thee. Be patient with all men in love, as (indeed) thou art. Be constant in prayer. Ask

* Cureton's "Corpus Ignatianum," Int. lxxx., which translation is quoted.

† The epistles of Ignatius (so called) have been, at various times, the subject of severe criticism and controversy. The inflated and discordant style with which many passages abound, the hesitation which Eusebius seems to show in quoting them, and the apparently forced references to doctrines not disputed at the time at which Ignatius wrote, have caused many portions of them to be regarded with extreme suspicion by eminently learned men, such as Archbishop Usher, Teutzel, Griesbach, Semler, Zieler and others; whilst an opposite party, as Desauniez, Daille, Oudin, Albertin, and Neander, were tempted to reject them altogether. Much light has been recently thrown on the subject by the discovery and purchase of many Ignatian MSS. from the convent in the desert of Nitria, in Syria. These treasures are now deposited in the British Museum; and the results of a careful investigation of certain copies of Ignatius' writings, in Syriac (the mother-tongue of the martyr), have proved to demonstration that in almost every case the suspected passages are interpolations, and lead to the conclusion that of the epistles ascribed to Ignatius three only are worthy of confidence, — the epistles to Polycarp, to the Ephesians, and to the Romans, — and that the ordinary copies of these have been largely interpolated. The results of the inquiry are presented to the public in a work recently published, entitled "Corpus Ignatianum; a complete collection of the Ignatian Epistles, genuine, interpolated and spurious, in Syriac, Greek and Latin, by William Cureton, M.A., F.R.S." London, Rivingtons, 1849.

more understanding than what thou (already) hast. Be watchful, for thou possessest a spirit that sleepeth not. Speak with all men according to the will of God. Bear the infirmities of all men like a perfect combatant; for where the labor is much, much also is the gain. If thou love the good disciples only, thou hast no grace; rather subdue those who are evil by gentleness. All wounds are not healed by one medicine. Allay cutting by tenderness. Be wise as the serpent in everything, and innocent as the dove as to those things which are requisite. On this account art thou (both) of flesh and spirit, that thou mayest be lacking in nothing, and mayest abound in all gifts. The time requireth, as a pilot a ship, and as he who standeth in the tempest the haven, that thou shouldest be worthy of God. Be vigilant as a combatant of God. That which is promised to us is life eternal, incorruptible, of which things thou art also persuaded. In everything I will be instead of thy soul, and my bonds, which thou hast loved. Let not those that seem to be something, and teach strange doctrines, astound thee, but stand in truth, like a combatant who is smitten; for it is the (part) of a great combatant that he should be smitten, and conquer. More especially on God's account it behoveth us to endure everything, that he may endure us. Be diligent (even) more than thou art. Be discerning of the times. Expect him who is above the times; Him to whom there are no times; Him who is unseen; Him who for our sakes was seen; Him who is palpable; Him who is impassible; Him who for our sakes suffered; Him who endured everything in every form for our sakes." *

* The epistles of Ignatius to the Magnesians, to the Trallians, to the Philadelphians, to the Smyrneans (mentioned somewhat hypothetically by Eusebius), and those of Mary of Cassobelæ to the martyr, with his reply, the epistles to the Tarsians, to the Antiochans, to Hero the Deacon, to the Philippians, to St. John, and to the Virgin Mary, may pass without notice, as spurious. As it regards many of the churches supposed to be addressed, it is manifest that they did not lie in the course of the journey which the martyr was now taking.

About the same time, he addressed the Ephesians in the following terms:

"Ignatius, who is Theophorus, to the church which is blessed in the greatness of God the Father, and perfected; to her who was separated from eternity to be at all times for glory that abideth and changeth not, and is perfected and chosen in the purposes of truth by the will of the Father of Jesus Christ, our God; to her who is worthy of happiness; to her who is at Ephesus in Jesus Christ in joy unblamable, much peace.

"Forasmuch as your well-beloved name is acceptable to me in God, which ye have acquired by nature, by a right and just will, and also by faith and love of Jesus Christ our Saviour; and ye are imitators of God and fervent in the blood of God, and have speedily accomplished a work congenial to you; for when ye heard that I was bound from actions for the sake of the common name and hope, — and I hope, through your prayers, to be devoured of beasts at Rome, that by means of this, of which I am accounted worthy, I may be empowered with strength to be a disciple of God, — ye were diligent to come and see me. Forasmuch, therefore, as we have received your abundance in the name of God, by Onesimus, who is your bishop in love unutterable, whom I pray that ye love in Jesus Christ our Lord, and that all of you be like him; for blessed is he who hath given you, worthy as ye are, such a bishop; but forasmuch as love suffereth me not to be silent respecting you on this account, I have been forward to entreat you to be diligent in the will of God; for so long as no one lust is implanted in you which is able to torment you, lo, ye live in God. I rejoice in you, and offer supplication on account of you Ephesians, a church to be held in everlasting remembrance. For those who are carnal are not able to do spiritual things, neither the spiritual carnal things; likewise neither faith those things which are foreign to faith, nor lack of faith what is faith's. For those things which ye have done in the flesh, even they are spiritual, because ye have done everything in Jesus Christ, and ye are

prepared for the building of God the Father, and are raised upon high by the engine of Jesus Christ, which is the cross; and ye are drawn by the cord, which is the Holy Ghost; and your pulley is your faith, and your love is the way that leadeth upon high to God. Pray for all men, for there is hope of repentance for them, that they may be accounted worthy of God. By your words rather let them be instructed. Against their harsh words be ye conciliatory in meekness of mind and gentleness; against their blasphemies do ye pray; and against their error be ye armed with faith; and against their fierceness be ye peaceful and quiet; and be ye not astounded by them. Let us, then, be imitators of our Lord in meekness, and (emulous) as to who shall be injured, and depressed, and defrauded (more than the rest). The work is not of promise unless a man be found in the power of faith even to the end. It is better that a man be silent when he is something, than that he should be speaking when he is not; that by those things which he speaks he should act, and by those things of which he is silent he should be known. My spirit boweth down to the cross, which is an offence to those who do not believe, but to you salvation and life eternal. There was concealed from the ruler of this world the virginity of Mary, and the birth of our Lord, and the three mysteries of the shout, which were done in the quietness of God from the star. And here, at the manifestation of the Son, magic began to be destroyed, and all bonds were released, and the ancient kingdom and the error of evil were destroyed. From hence all things were moved together, and the destruction of death was devised, and there was the commencement of that which was perfected in God."*

* No expositions given of this passage are satisfactory. The mysteries of the shout may refer to the song of the angels at Bethlehem, &c., and the star appears to have some relation to that seen by the wise men. These and some other passages would lead us to infer that, great as has been the reduction made in the amount of the genuine writings of Ignatius, a further excision may yet follow. The close of the epistle to Polycarp is omitted in one Latin version, and has been excluded here as incongruous.

The third epistle of the same St. Ignatius:

"Ignatius, who is Theophorus, to the church which has been pitied in the greatness of the Father Most High; to her who presideth in the place of the country of the Romans, who is worthy of God, and worthy of life, and happiness, and praise, and remembrance; and is worthy of prosperity, and presideth in love; and is perfected in the law of Christ blameless, much peace.*

"Long since have I prayed to God that I might be accounted worthy to behold your faces, which are worthy of God; now, therefore, being bound in Jesus Christ, I hope to meet you and salute you, if there be the will that I should be accounted worthy to the end. For the beginning is well-disposed, if I be accounted worthy to attain to the end, that I may receive my portion without hindrance, through suffering. For I am afraid of your love, lest it should injure me. For you, indeed, it is easy for you to do what you wish; but for me, it is difficult for me to be accounted worthy of God; neither will ye, if ye be silent, be found in a better work than this. If ye leave me, I shall be the word of God; but if ye love my flesh, again am I to myself a voice. Ye will not give me anything better than this, that I should be sacrificed to God while the altar is ready; that ye may be in one concord in love, and may praise God the Father through Jesus Christ our Lord, because he has accounted a bishop worthy to be God's, having called him from the east to the west. It is good that I should set from the world in God, that I may rise in Him in life.

"You have never envied any one Ye have taught others.

* An argument has been derived in favor of Rome as the metropolitan see from the inscription to the church of the Romans, as being longer and more emphatic than that to the other churches. This is proved, by the recent discovery, to be a fallacy. The inscription to the church at Ephesus is not very different from that to Rome. The words "in the place of the country of the Romans" clearly designate the city itself as that over which the church presided, not the Roman territory in general.

Pray only for strength to be given to me from within and from without, that I may not only speak, but also may be willing; and not that I may be called a Christian only, but also that I may be found to be (one); for if I am found to be (one), I am also able to be called (so). Then (indeed) shall I be faithful when I am no longer seen in the world. For there is nothing which is seen that is good. The work is not a matter of persuasion, but Christianity is great when the world hateth it. I write to all the churches, and declare to all men that I die willingly for God, if it be that ye hinder me not. I entreat you be not (affected) towards me by love; this is unseasonable. Leave me to the beasts, that through them I may be accounted worthy of God. I am the wheat of God, and by the teeth of the beasts I am ground, that I may be found the pure bread of God. With provoking, provoke ye the beasts, that they may make a grave for me, and may leave nothing of my body, that even then after I am fallen asleep I may not be a burden upon any one. Then shall I be in truth a disciple of Jesus Christ, when the world seeth not even my body. Entreat our Lord for me, that through these instructions I may be found a sacrifice to God.

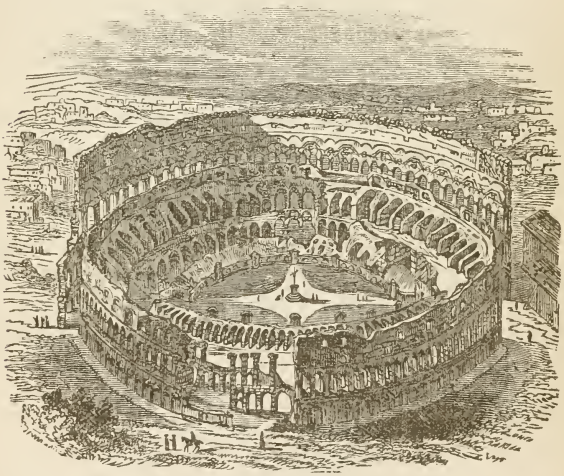
"I do not charge you like Peter and Paul, who are apostles, but I am one condemned; they, indeed, are free, but I am a slave even until now. But if I suffer I shall be the freedman of Jesus Christ, and I shall rise from the dead in him free. And now, being bound, I learn to desire nothing. From Syria, and even to Rome, I am cast among beasts by sea and by land, by night and by day, being bound between ten leopards, which are the band of soldiers, who, even while I do good to them, do evil more to me. But I am the rather instructed by their injury, but not on this account am I justified to myself. What is expedient for me? Let nothing envy me of those that are seen and that are not seen, that I should be accounted worthy of Jesus Christ. Fire and the cross, and the beasts that are prepared, amputation of the limbs, and scattering of the bones,

and crushing of the whole body, hard torments of the devil, — let these come upon me, and only may I be accounted worthy of Jesus Christ. The pains of the birth stand over me, and my love is crucified, and there is no fire in me for another love. I do not desire the food of corruption, neither the desires of this world. The bread of God I seek, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ; and his blood I seek, a drink which is love incorruptible. My spirit saluteth you, and the love of the churches, which received me in the name of Jesus Christ; for even those who were near to the way in the flesh preceded me in every city.

"Now, therefore, being about to arrive shortly at Rome, I know many things in God; but I moderate myself that I may not perish through boasting, for now it behoveth me to fear the more, and not to regard those who puff me up. For they who say to me such things scourge me; for I love to suffer, but I do not know if I am worthy. For to many zeal is not seen, but with me it has war. I have need, therefore, of meekness, by which the ruler of this world is destroyed. I am able to write to you of heavenly things; but I fear lest I should do you an injury. Know me from myself. For I am cautious lest ye should not be able to receive it, and should be perplexed. For even I, not because I am bound and am able to know heavenly things and the places of angels, and the station of the powers that are seen and that are not seen, on this account am I a disciple; for I am far short of the perfection which is worthy of God. Be ye perfectly safe in the patience of Jesus Christ our Lord."

Among the most remarkable remains which still distinguish the city of Rome is a relic, which, whether regarded by the historian, the antiquarian, the architect, or the Christian, can never fail to give rise to a thrill of interest. It is the amphitheatre, projected by Augustus, but erected in the reigns of Vespasian and Titus, though not perfectly complete till the accession of Domitian. Unlike most preceding works of its

kind, which were placed in a natural hollow, affording the advantage of a rising ground for their tier upon tier of seats, this erection, built of tiburtine stone, stands on a level area in the midst of the city itself. The Palatine Hill, which rises behind it, supplies a rich back screen of evergreens, nobly enhancing the beauty of the red ruin; whilst the moss and lichens, which have crept undisturbed over the enormous structure, record the many centuries which have elapsed since its gigantic proportions first towered before the eyes of the Roman people. But though the external of this structure is substantially entire, its interior affords melancholy evidence of the spoiler's hand. The



FLAVIAN AMPHITHEATRE, OR COLISEUM.

marbles which decorated it — the vomitories through which the crowd of living population once poured its rejoicing masses — the astonishing pageants which delighted the barbarous eyes of a sight-loving people, together with the crowds of spectators themselves, who presented in the days of its glory an uprising

wall of human faces, now sportive with mirth, now plaintive with sympathy, and now exulting with the fiendish expressions of diabolical cruelty, — all are gone, and the Coliseum remains a melancholy spectacle of Rome's majesty and of Rome's barbarity. Time was when that pile resounded with the yells and roars of ferocious beasts turned loose upon each other; when within that circle the gladiator turned his dying thoughts to the far-distant home he was never more to behold; when the bleeding and suppliant athlete awaited, in the anguish of solicitude, the sign of the people's thumb bent downward, which should announce his pardon, or its upturning, which should decree his death. And, more than this, often has the multitude gathered within those walls to witness the last dying agonies of noble-minded men, whose only crime was that they were true to their God against a world in arms, and whose spirits, here passing from their tortured bodies, rose firm, amidst the yells of an infuriated populace, to the songs of angels, the welcome of their Master, and the repose of eternity.

In this building, which would accommodate eighty-seven thousand spectators, and which was then crowded by "the whole city," Ignatius, if the traditional account may be received, was brought by the Roman prefect, who had caused it to be announced that the Bishop of Antioch was on this day to combat with wild beasts. When he was in the ample theatre, turning to the people as one who gloried in the ignominy which was before him, Ignatius cried out, "Romans, spectators of this present scene, I am here not because of any crime, nor to absolve myself from any charge of wickedness, but to follow God; by the love of whom I am impelled, and whom I long for irrepressibly. For I am his wheat, and must be ground by the teeth of beasts, that I may become his pure bread." When he had uttered these words, the lions, being let loose, instantly flew upon him and devoured him altogether, with the exception of his larger bones; thus fulfilling his prayer that the beasts might be his sepulchre, and that nothing might be left of his

body; the Lord receiving greater glory from his sufferings than would have followed his escape from the wild beasts.*

The bones of this faithful servant were gathered up by the Roman Christians after the assembly was dismissed, and deposited without the city. They were afterwards transported to Antioch "on the shoulders of all the cities,"† and were buried in the cemetery without the Daphnean gate. In the reign of Theodosius they were transferred with great pomp to a church consecrated to Christianity from having been a temple of Fortune; and a public festival was instituted in annual commemoration of the event.‡ To mark still more the degenerate state of Christianity as it then existed, Chrysostom invited all people to visit them, describing the benefits which would accrue from such an inspection. The Romanists declare that when Antioch fell into the hands of the Saracens the bones of St. Ignatius were rescued, and that many of them are now deposited in the church of St. Clement at Rome. In this, and similar cases, there is no test by which the pretension can be tried. The traditions respecting the body of the saint are perhaps no better founded than the hierarchical assumptions which the name of Ignatius is called up to maintain. But whether the legend be true or otherwise, the fact has certainly no moral value.

The Bishops of Antioch who immediately succeeded Ignatius are related by Eusebius to have been, Heron Cornelius, Eros, and Theophilus. The last was converted from paganism to Christianity, and published works in defence of it, as well as in opposition to the heresies of Marcion and Hermogenes. The church of Antioch is said to have been prosperous.

Eusebius records, in the commencement of his ecclesiastical history, a correspondence — which he declares he had seen among the records of Edessa in Mesopotamia — between King

* Martyrium SS. Martyris Ignatii. The Syriac version is imperfect towards the close, leaving the true reading therefore only traditionary, and, it must be owned, doubtful.

† Chrysostom.

‡ Evagrius, lib. i. c. xvi.

Agbarus and Christ himself. This tradition related that the monarch, being seized with a violent disorder, sent a message to Christ entreating a cure, and that our Lord, in reply, promised to send him a certain disciple to remove his disease. It further relates that after the ascension, Thaddeus, one of the seventy, was despatched to him by a miraculous message, and, after performing many miracles, cured the king himself. The tradition has no historical attestation, but is a pious fraud, though unquestionably invented before the time of Eusebius. It may, however, be regarded as a proof that Christianity was known at a very early period in that district.

# CHAPTER VII.

## JUSTIN (MARTYR) AND HIS TIMES.

The early part of the second century was remarkable not only for the agitation which existed in many parts of the Roman empire against Christianity, but for the conversion to the truth of a remarkable man named Justin, called sometimes, from his early professions, a philosopher, but more usually, from his ultimate fate, the Martyr. He was born about the year 103,* in Flavia, a new city which had been built in the immediate vicinity of the ancient Shechem or Sychar. He was not, however, in his religious opinions, a Samaritan, but a pagan, the son of Priscus, a Gentile. His youth was spent in acquiring the various branches of a polite education, and in forming an acquaintance with the poets, orators and historians, of the classical period. He especially studied philosophy — a term used by Pythagoras, and employed to comprehend physics, ethics, and dialectics. He himself relates the history of his studies. At first he sought instruction from a Stoic, who, believing, according to the princi-

* Some prefer the year 89, A. D.

ples of that sect, which held external events to be subject to fate,* the law of nature to be the Deity himself, that all things were governed by necessity, and that the soul of man was perishable, was able to teach him nothing concerning the true nature of God.† Indeed, Justin tells us that his instructor neither knew this himself, nor deemed this knowledge at all essential. He therefore left the Stoic, and betook himself to a philosopher of the Peripatetic school — one who was, in his own estimation at least, remarkably acute. Before this instructor propounded to him the Aristotelian dogmas, which held death to be the extinction of being, that the soul after its separation from the body ceased to possess any passions, and that nature is an unconscious impulse, he demanded to be informed what rate of payment he was to receive; on which Justin, believing him to be no true philosopher, left him abruptly; but burning still with a desire to pursue his inquiries, next addressed himself to a Pythagorean who boasted much wisdom, and from whom he might expect to learn metaphysics, or the dogma that the Deity was the pervading soul of the universe, from whom all souls derived their origin; but the tutor, as preliminary to the Pythagorean system, which involved such knowledge, dismissed the pupil till he had become acquainted with music, astronomy and geometry, asking him whether he thought it possible for him to understand those things which were conducive to the blessed life, unless he had first learned the things which render the mind able to contemplate goodness and beauty?‡ Justin was

* Arriani, Epict. l. iv.

† The Stoics, like Epictetus, one of their best specimens, had for their maxim, ἀνέχου καὶ ἀπέχου — Sustain and abstain. An admirable specimen of the latter stoical system is afforded by this philosopher. His morality might have been learned from Christianity itself. Plutarch, however, accused many of the Stoics, even Zeno himself, of leading a voluptuous life.

‡ The Pythagorean system found in musical relations their principles of the harmony of the universe; in astronomical ones, their notions of heaven and of infinitude; in geometrical ones, many of their expositions of religion and virtue.

disappointed much at this, especially as he thought the Pythagorean really possessed some knowledge; but he felt that he could not defer for the time which such studies would cost him that divine knowledge he sought so eagerly. He therefore turned, as a last resource, to a professor recently arrived in his neighborhood, from whom he hoped to learn the Platonic philosophy, then in great vogue. He pursued this study with much earnestness, and congratulated himself on his progress from day to day. "The knowledge," he tells us, "of incorporeal things much delighted me, and the contemplation of ideas gave wings to my mind, and in a short time I seemed to myself to have become wise, and I stupidly thought that forthwith I should behold God, — for this is the end of the Platonic philosophy."

Whilst seeking solitude in this state of mind, he one day wandered near the sea. There he met an aged man of grave and comely appearance, who followed him a little distance. Justin turned round, confronting him, and fixing his eyes inquiringly upon him. After some preliminary conversation, in which Justin told the stranger the purpose which had led him

*Τί τι δε μάλιστα οἰδεν ; Ἑρ. Ἀριθμητικὴν, ἀστρονομίαν, τερατείαν, γεωμετρίαν, μουσικὴν, γοητείαν.*— LUCIAN, *Vitarum Auctio.*

The five years' silence which Pythagoras is represented to have prescribed (though the time was not uniform) is often the subject of Lucian's satire. Pythagoras is in the following scene put up to auction by Mercury. Speaking of the five years' silence, the merchant says, speaking to the philosopher whom he is invited to buy :

"*Merc.* Thou shalt have the son of Crœsus (who is dumb) for a pupil : as for me, I am talkative, and do not wish to be a statue. But what will come after the five years' silence ?

"*Pyth.* Thou shalt be exercised in music and geometry.

"*Merc.* That is an odd thing, to become a harper before I am a philosopher.

"*Pyth.* After this, thou wilt learn numeration.

"*Merc.* But that I know already.

"*Pyth.* How dost thou numerate ?

"*Merc.* One, two, three, four.

"*Pyth.* But what thou thinkest to be four thou shalt learn to be ten." (Referring to the *trigon.*)

to seek so retired a situation, the following interlocution began, as Justin himself relates:

"Art thou," said the stranger, "a lover of talk, but not of deeds and of truth; and dost thou prefer the sophistical to the practical?"

Then I said, "What can any one do better than to show how reason (λογος) governs all things; so that he who seizes it and rides upon it shall look down upon the mistakes and occupations of others, and see that they do nothing healthily, nothing well-pleasing to God? But without philosophy and right reason no one can be wise. It therefore becomes every man to be a philosopher, and such an occupation should be esteemed the most important and the most honorable; other things only holding the second or third place. The things which belong to philosophy are reasonable and worthy of being received, and the things which are severed from it, and do not accompany it, are burdensome and vulgar to those who take them in hand."*

A little more of this conversation will illustrate the unsatisfactory processes of the Gentile philosophy.

"Does philosophy, then, confer blessedness?" said the stranger.

"Yes, verily," said I, "and it alone."

"What, then, is philosophy?" said he, "and what is its blessedness? Tell me, if there be nothing to prevent."

"Philosophy," said I, "is the science of the existent and of the true; and blessedness is the prize of understanding and wisdom."

"What dost thou call God?" said he.

"That which always exists the same, and in the same manner, and which is the cause why all other things are, this indeed is God." So I replied to him; he was pleased at hearing me, and asked me thus again:

"Is not science a common name for differing things? for in

* Dial. cum. Typh., iii.

all arts he who has a scientific knowledge of any of them is called a scientific person; in strategy, and government, and medicine; and equally in things divine and human. Is it not true that science is that which confers the knowledge of things human and divine?"

"Most true," said I.

"What then? Is a man's knowing God the same thing as knowing music and arithmetic and astronomy, or anything of that kind?"

"By no means," said I.

"Thou hast not rightly answered me," said he; "for if any one should tell thee that there is in India an animal in its nature unlike all other animals, but of such and such a kind, multiform and many colored, thou couldst not know what it was unless thou hadst seen it, nor wouldst thou be able to speak about it if thou hadst not heard it described by some one who had seen it."

"True," said I.

"How, then," said he, "do the philosophers think rightly about God, or speak the truth concerning Him, when they have neither seen Him nor heard Him?"

"But," said I, "Father, the Divinity is not to be seen with the eyes like other living substances, but only to be comprehended by the mind; — so Plato says, and I believe him."

"Is there, then," said he, "in the mind such a power as is superior to that of the senses; or can the mind of man ever perceive God, not being prepared previously by the Holy Spirit?"

The conversation, pursued after the method of the ancient schools, was thus conducted step by step, until the dogmas of heathen philosophy were undermined, and Justin was brought at length to see that there was a race of men more worthy of attention than the philosophers of his fond idolatry, and to seek for the true knowledge of God in the writings of the ancient Scriptures, and in the doctrines of Jesus himself. "When I

turned over his remarks in my mind," observes Justin, "I found this to be the only true, safe, and useful philosophy."

Justin now became a disciple of the Cross. "I found," said he, "that the doctrines of salvation have in them a certain terrible majesty most useful to affect those who have turned aside from the ways of righteousness, and that those who meditate upon them find the sweetest peace."

Such was the process by which this great man was made to bend down his spirit before the power of revealed religion.

Previous to this crisis, and whilst he was yet a disciple of Plato, the lives of Christians appear to have left the most favorable impression on his mind. "I heard," he tells us,* "of the accusations brought against Christians, yet I saw them fearless in the midst of death, and of all other calamities which seemed terrible, nor could I understand how it was possible that they could be guilty of the wickedness and licentiousness with which they were charged."

Being now a Christian, Justin employed his pen and his great talents in the vindication of his newly-adopted faith. He speaks of Alexandria as one who was familiar with its localities, and he perhaps may have visited it with the view of promulgating in that city the principles he had been divinely taught to adopt.† Eusebius informs us that he had made use of his profession as a philosopher to proclaim the truth.‡

If the commonly received account does not refer to another Justin, this philosopher twice visited Rome. In that city he wrote his treatise against Marcion, a native of Pontus, one of the most distinguished heretics of the early centuries. This man, the son of a bishop, and himself a convert to the Christian faith, had been excommunicated from the church,— perhaps from his unsafe views of truth, though Epiphanius declares for immorality,— by his father, who refused to restore his criminal

* Apologia, ii. and xii.

† Cohortat. ad Gentes, § 12.

‡ Hist. Eccl., iv. § 11.

son, though he avowed his penitence. Marcion, therefore, journeyed to Rome, where he made a more successful attempt to be reädmitted to communion. His persistence in his old errors, however, notwithstanding their temporary abjuration, caused him to be more than once excommunicated by the church in that city.

Marcion's doctrinal system was peculiar. According to Theodoret, he held "*four* unbegotten existences." God, the Creator, Matter, which he declared to be eternal, and the Devil. He held that the manifestation of the Creator, the God of the Old Testament, and of Jesus, were at variance, and that the former had been overturned by the latter; he condemned marriage; denied the resurrection; rejected much of the New Testament; acknowledged only one gospel, — that of Luke, — in which he made retrenchments of all which did not suit his views, omitting all passages which asserted the sonship of Christ. In a similar way he received only such parts of the Epistles as squared with his singular opinions. That his followers were sincere may be inferred from the number of their martyrs. Yet, though he held these views, Marcion could see no reason why he should be deprived of communion with the Christian church. The treatise which Justin wrote against him is now lost; a fact to be much regretted, since it must have thrown much light on the doctrine and discipline of the early church.

The Emperor Trajan ended his reign in the year 117, and was succeeded by Hadrian, an active, restless, resolute monarch, as watchful to maintain the limits of his dominions as Trajan had been to increase them by military acquisition. The edicts of Trajan had rendered Christianity — always liable to persecution as a new and strange religion — a positively illegal one, condemned by imperial decree. Though Hadrian is not reported to have added any express edicts to those previously existing, he did not interpose to restrain his governors, always indifferent to blood, and never indisposed to sacrifice individuals,

especially those whose name was a reproach, to the policy which their own interests might suggest. At this time, accordingly, began THE FOURTH GENERAL PERSECUTION.

Yet, though exposing its disciples to all kinds of torture and obloquy, the Christian religion continued to spread. In the year 124 Hadrian visited Greece, and was initiated into all the mysteries of Hellenic mythology. Whilst there, Quadratus, Bishop of Athens, who had succeeded Publius, — a martyr, whose preaching and government, according to the testimony of Origen, had produced important effects in checking the persecution against Christianity which was then raging with remarkable virulence, — addressed to the emperor an apology, which seems to have been received with some attention, especially as it was seconded by another from Aristides, an Athenian Christian of those times. An extract from the former of these may be quoted as tending to show, what indeed is apparent from all the apologies of those times, that the miracles of our Lord were not objected to by their opponents because the facts themselves were disputed, but only because they were attributed to an agency not divine. "The deeds of our Saviour were always before you, for they were true miracles; those that were healed, those that were raised from the dead, were seen, not only when healed and when raised, but were always present. They remained living a long time, not only whilst our Lord was on earth, but likewise when he had left the earth; so that some of them have also lived to our own times."*

Yet, though these apologies were not perhaps without their influence, a much greater effect was produced on the mind of the emperor by Serenius Granianus, the proconsul of Asia Minor, who complained that it seemed to him unreasonable for the Christians to be persecuted only to gratify the clamors of the people, without trial and without crime. To this remon-

* Eusebius, book iv. c. 3.

strance the emperor replied as follows, in a letter addressed to the successor of the remonstrant proconsul.

To Minucius Fundanus.

"I have received a letter written to me by the very illustrious Serenius Granianus, whom you have succeeded. To me then the affair seems by no means fit to be slightly passed over, that men may not be disturbed without cause, and that sycophants may not be encouraged in their odious practices. If the people of the province will appear publicly, and make open charges against the Christians, so as to give them an opportunity of answering for themselves, let them proceed in that manner only, and not by rude demands and mere clamors; for it is much more proper, if any person will accuse them, that you should take cognizance of these matters. If any then accuse, and show that they actually break the laws, do you determine according to the nature of the crime. But, by Hercules, if the charge be a mere calumny, do you estimate the enormity of such calumny, and punish it as it deserves."

Yet the temper of the emperor was very far from being favorable to the Christian faith. This is shown by a letter which he addressed, about this time, to the consul Servianus. "Those who worship Serapis are Christians, and those who call themselves bishops of Christ are worshippers of Serapis. There is no ruler of a synagogue, no Samaritan, no presbyter of the Christians, who is not an astrologer — a soothsayer. The Patriarch of the Jews himself, when he comes to Egypt, is forced by one party to worship Serapis, — by the other, Christ. Their one God is none; Him, Christians, Jews and all races, worship alike." Such indefinite Pantheism is consistent with no true regard for Christianity.*

Not long after this, Justin wrote another treatise, which has

* Flavius Vopiscus apud Neander.

been happily preserved, and which constitutes one of the most precious relics of antiquity. It is designated "The First Apology for the Christians," and is addressed to Antoninus Pius and to his adopted sons, Verissimus (afterwards M. Aurelius, the emperor) and Lucius (afterwards the Emperor Verus).*

The character of Antoninus, who ascended the imperial throne A. D. 138, and reigned twenty-two years, was highly distinguished for public and private virtues. The name Pius bears reference to the filial regard shown by the emperor for the memory of his adopted father, Hadrian. So wise and moderate was the reign of Antoninus, and so successfully were the energies of the monarch directed to the discouragement of informers, the relief of want and woe, the maintenance of peace, and the improvements of the administrative power, as to gain for him the title of a second Numa.

In addressing this emperor,† Justin appeals to the title borne by him as a reason why he may be expected to give a fair hearing to the Christian cause; declaring that the Christians desired no favor, merely simple justice, and that the only evil which could befall them was to be proved guilty of crime. Till then the civil power might kill but could not injure them; they asked a fair examination, and that they should be no longer condemned unheard; for, as the case now stood, the confession of Christianity constituted of itself the highest offence. In this treatise Justin disposes of the charge of atheism brought against the Christians, showing that the only ground for the accusation was that Christians did not worship a multitude of gods. He then gives a succinct view of the doctrine of Christ, showing that it consisted in the practice of the moral virtues, and that it

* The conjecture of some of the best critics is, that this apology was written A. D. 139. See Smith's Dict. of Greek and Roman Biography, art. Justin.

† The second apology of Justin, as it is usually designated, is here, according to the best authorities, regarded as the first, and *vice versa*, though contrary to the opinion of Eusebius, who appears misty on this subject.

encouraged no expectations of temporal dignities; at the same time enumerating the various points of its excellence in opposition to the false systems of the heathens, and repudiating the charge brought against them of wickedness, exposing new-born children, and other similar atrocities. He clearly expounds the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, quoting the passage, "Behold a virgin shall conceive," &c., and defends this article of belief against supposed heathen objections. He traces the events of Christ's birth and death, comparing them with the productions of the Hebrew Scriptures. He states the practices of the Christians regarding baptism, which he declares to have been imitated by the heathen religions from the predictions of the prophets. He speaks of the received and baptized convert admitted by the kiss of peace, and of the administration of the eucharist to the convert so baptized by the presiding bishop; which observance he declares the heathens to have imitated in the Mithryan mysteries.

"And after this time," says he, "we commemorate continually these truths, and they who have property succor all the rest, and we are always together. And in all our oblations we praise the Maker of all things, by his Son Jesus Christ, and by the Holy Spirit. And on Sunday (as it is called) a convocation is made of all who remain in the cities or in the country into one spot; and the memoirs of apostles, or the writings of prophets, are read as long as there is time. When the reader ceases, the president gives an exhortation, and admonishes to remember such excellent things. Then we all rise together and send up our prayers, and, as I before said, ceasing from prayer, bread is brought, and wine and water, and the president sends up prayers and thanks with all his power, and the people shout applause, saying Amen. Then distribution and communion is made by those who have given thanks to those present, and is sent by the deacons to those who have been absent. And those who have abundance are willing to contribute according to the inclination of each; and what is collected is laid aside by the

president, and he relieves the orphans and widows, and those who are in distress, from disease or any other cause, and those who are in prison, and strangers from home; — in one word, he cares for all who are in need. But we meet on Sunday because that is the first day, when God, having changed darkness and matter, made the world, and because Jesus Christ, our Saviour, arose on that day from the dead." *

This treatise exhibits some unmistakable indications of the decline of the church from the pristine purity of its doctrine. Not only do we discover traces of those forced interpretations of scripture for which a subsequent age was so remarkable, but the traces of celibacy as meritorious, the identification of baptism with regeneration and illumination, the use of wine mingled with water in the Supper, and an approximation, at the least, to the doctrine of transubstantiation, are visible in these pages. Already the tarnish was gathering upon the brightness of the once pure gold.

This apology — an able production, though by no means of the highest class — appears to have produced its desired effect. Eusebius relates that soon after, when earthquakes in various quarters, and destructive fires in Rome, Antioch and Carthage, excited the popular feeling against the body of Christians, and caused the ancient enmity to be revived with more than usual bitterness, the emperor issued the following rescript:

"The Emperor Cæsar Marcus Aurelius Antonius Augustus, Armenicus, Pontifex Maximus, Tribune of the People XV., Consul III., sends greeting to the Assembly of Asia. I know, indeed, that the gods themselves will take care that such men as these shall not escape detection; for it would more properly belong to them to punish those who will not worship them, than to you. And whilst you drive them into a tumult, you only confirm them the more in their mind, by accusing them as impious. And thus to them it would be more desirable, when

* Apoiog. prima, p. 68.

arraigned, to appear to die for their God, than to live. Whence, also, they may come off in triumph when they yield up their lives in preference to a conformity with those things which you exact of them. But as to those earthquakes which have taken place, and still continue, it is not wrong to admonish you who are cast down, whenever these things happen, to compare your own deportment with theirs. They indeed become, on these occasions, so much the more cheerful towards God; but you, the whole of this time in which you seem not to have correct knowledge, neglect both the gods and other duties, especially the worship of the Immortal. But the Christians who worship him you expel and persecute to death. Respecting these, however, many of the governors of the provinces also wrote to our divine father; to whom, also, he replied, not to trouble them at all, unless they appeared to make attempts against the Roman government. Many also have sent communications to me respecting them, to whom I also wrote in reply, following the course pursued by my father. But if any still persevere in creating difficulties to any one of those, because he is of this description, let him that is thus arraigned be absolved from crime, although he should appear to be such, but let the accuser be held guilty."

In the year 161, Marcus Aurelius, designated as the philosopher, succeeded Antoninus Pius. This distinguished man had imbibed the lessons of the stoical philosophy, and has received the character of one "severe to himself, indulgent to the imperfections of others, just and beneficent to all mankind."* His conduct towards his Christian subjects little justifies this favorable verdict. During his reign the enmity against the disciples of Christ was inflamed by the occurrence of a terrible pestilence, which committed great ravages throughout the circuit of the Roman empire, attributed, by the enemies of the faith, to the increasing tenets of the followers of Jesus. This was in precise

* Gibbon.

accordance with the language afterwards employed by Tertullian, in his celebrated Apology.

"You take it for granted that Christians are the cause of all public misfortune, and even of all popular inconvenience. If the Tiber shall rise against the walls, or if the Nile shall not rise in the fields, — if the heavens stand still, or if the earth moves, — if there be famine, or if there be pestilence, — the cry instantly is, 'Cast the Christians to the lions!' Are so many deserving of one punishment? But I pray you did no misfortunes befall the world and the city before Tiberius, — that is, before the advent of Christ? * * * Was there no true God worshipped at Rome when Hannibal measured out Roman rings as his prey by the bushel at Cannæ? Were not all your gods worshipped by the people when the Gauls occupied the Capitol itself? * * *

"What verdict do you not give in this, that you rather condemn a Christian *ad lenonem* than *ad leonem?* You believe us to fear sin more than death. Crucify, torture, condemn us. This harvest is our increase, — the blood of Christians is our seed."

The moderation of Marcus Antoninus was not displayed in allaying the fury of this popular feeling. On the contrary, we learn from the testimony of Melito, Bishop of Sardis,* that new edicts, of greater force and stringency than those of preceding periods, were employed against the Christians. Informers were encouraged to prefer accusations against them, and those who were arraigned suffered the severity of the law. The emperor, by the testimony of his own "meditations," regarded the firmness of the believers as mere obstinacy, — an obstinacy only to be overcome by the terrors of physical suffering.

To this emperor Justin addressed a second apology,† less comprehensive than the first, though partaking of the same gen-

* Euseb. Eccl. Hist., lib. iv. 126.

† Usually called, according to the authority of Eusebius, the first.

eral character. The exciting cause of his address is related by Justin himself, in nearly the following words:

"A woman was living with a profligate husband. She had been herself, at one time, profligate also; but, after she had been made acquainted with the doctrine of Christ, had betaken herself to a better course of life; and, by expounding to him the Christian system, had endeavored to persuade him to conduct himself as she did, pointing out to him the eternal punishment which awaited those who lived licentiously, and beyond the bounds of right reason. But he, continuing still in the same course of flagitiousness, alienated the affections of his wife. Imagining it to be impious to remain in association with a man who violated, in his wickedness, all laws, she desired to be separated from him. But, in compliance with the wishes of her friends, who persuaded her that there was hope of her husband's reformation, she consented to remain with him. But, upon her husband's coming to Alexandria, his wickedness became still greater; till she, fearing lest she should become an accomplice in his wickedness, procured a divorce. Then that illustrious and virtuous husband, when he ought to have rejoiced that his wife, formerly the associate of slaves and mercenaries in drunkenness and all kinds of debauchery, had been gained over from such atrocities, and was endeavoring to persuade him to adopt the same course, accused her of being a Christian. She presented a memorial to you, O emperor, that she might have liberty to look after her household, promising that when her domestic affairs were arranged she would reply to the accusation. This was granted; but her husband, who could not then proceed further against her, took measures against one Ptolemy (whom Urbicus had already punished), the instructor of his wife in the Christian religion. He persuaded a certain friend of his, a centurion, to throw Ptolemy into prison, and to demand of him whether he were a Christian. Ptolemy, a man who worshipped truth and hated fraud and lies, having confessed this fact, was bound, and held a long time in prison. At length,

being again led before Urbicus, he was asked only this one thing, — whether he were a Christian; and, on his acknowledgment of it, was ordered to be led forth to death. But a Christian, named Lucius, who witnessed this unjust sentence, thus addressed Urbicus: 'What is the reason that you have sentenced this man, neither accused of adultery, nor of fornication, nor of homicide, nor of theft, nor of plunder, nor of any crime, but only of the acknowledgment of the Christian name? Little does it become the emperor surnamed the Pious, or the philosopher the son of Cæsar, or the sacred senate, to judge as you have done.' Then Urbicus, without more rejoinder, said, 'You also appear to me to be of the same race.' Lucius said, 'It is true;' on which Urbicus commanded him also to be seized. But he was only thankful that he was about to be delivered from such wicked tyrants, knowing that he was going to the Father and King of heaven. A third person, coming in at the same time, was sentenced to a similar punishment."

In this Apology Justin declares that he himself was expecting the same fate, at the instance of Crescens, "that lover of tumult and parade." This Crescens claimed the name of a philosopher; a title which he contradicted by enormous wickedness and insatiable avarice. He found his interest in accusing the Christians of atheism and impiety. It is not improbable that Justin at last met his death through the intrigues of this designing man.

Justin, after he had produced the Apologies,* appears to have visited Ephesus, where, on the walks of the Xystus, he encountered Trypho the Jew.† Trypho, having himself studied philosophy, was attracted by the coarse pallium, forming part of the garb of a philosopher, which Justin still continued to wear, and a prolonged conversation took place between them on the respective merits of Judaism and Christianity, afterwards recorded by Justin in a treatise called "A Dialogue with

* Neander. † Dial. cum Triphone, ab initio.

Trypho the Jew." In this treatise, the author mentions again the charge which seems to have been often repeated against Christians of that day, that they feasted on human flesh, and that the banquet was followed by abominable wickedness.* In this treatise he also puts forth his millenarian views, though he speaks of such views as by no means universal among real Christians.

Justin, as he had conjectured, met with death as the recompense of his second apology; and, when he had returned from Ephesus to Rome, was apprehended at the instigation of Crescens,† and brought before Rusticus, one of the emperor's instructors in philosophy, and, perhaps, an accurate reflector of the imperial opinions regarding Christianity.

Rusticus: "Obey the gods, and comply with the edicts of the emperor."

Justin: "None can be justly blamed for obeying the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Rusticus: "In what kind of learning and discipline hast thou been instructed?"

Justin: "In all kinds; but though it is little esteemed by those who are led away into error, I have at least embraced the Christian religion."

Rusticus: "Wretch, art thou then captivated by that religion?"

Justin: "I am; because I gain from it the consolation of being in the right path."

Rusticus: "What are the doctrines of the Christian religion?"

Justin: "We Christians believe one God, Creator of all things visible and invisible; we acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God; foretold by prophets, the author

* In an excited state of society the most incredible reports readily obtain credence. In the time of the Commonwealth, reports affixed a similar stigma to the Cavaliers.

† Euseb. Eccl. Hist., lib. iv. c. 16.

and teacher of salvation, and the future Judge of mankind."

Rusticus: "Where do the Christians assemble?" *

Justin: "Where they please and are able. God is not confined to place; he is unseen, and fills heaven and earth, and can therefore be everywhere adored by the faithful."

Rusticus: "In what place do you instruct your disciples?"

Justin: "I have lived, till now, near the house of Martin, at the Timothean Baths. I have come to Rome for the second time, and know no other place in the city."

The judge then asked of Justin the question once more, whether he were a Christian. He put the same question, also, to others who had been apprehended at the same time. These were Chariton and Charitana; Evelpistus, a servant of the emperor, and a Cappadocian by birth; Hierax, a Phrygian; Peon and Liberianius. They all answered that "by the divine mercy they were Christians;" and Evelpistus said that "though his parents had taught him this faith, he had heard Justin's discourses with much profit."

Rusticus: "Hear, thou who art called an orator, and who thinkest thou hast gained the true philosophy; if I scourge thee from head to foot, thinkest thou that thou wilt go to heaven?"

Justin: "Should I suffer what thou threatenest, I hope to receive the reward of true Christians."

Rusticus: "Thou imaginest, then, that thou shalt go to heaven, and be there rewarded?"

Justin: "I do not only imagine it, but know it, and cannot entertain the least doubt respecting it."

The prefect commanded them to go together, and sacrifice to the gods; declaring that, in case of refusal, they should be tormented without mercy.

Justin: "There is nothing which we more earnestly desire

* This was a searching question, implying the suspicion and treachery under which Christians were at this time living, and a direct answer to it would have compromised the safety of the worshippers.

than to endure torments for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ; it is this which will advance our happiness, and impart courage before his bar, at which the whole world must appear."

The other Christians added, "Accomplish thy purpose quickly; we are Christians, and will never sacrifice to idols."

Rusticus: "As for those who refuse to sacrifice to the gods, and to obey the imperial commands, they shall be first scourged, and then beheaded according to the law."*

These pious Christians were, in obedience to this order, led forth to the usual place of execution, and the severity of this sentence was executed upon them. They were whipped and beheaded. After their death, their bodies were taken by their Christian companions, and interred.

So died Justin, "the most celebrated of those who flourished in those times;"† the "man of God;" "the living specimen of manifold virtues."‡ The Romish church celebrates his honor on the 1st of June; and the church of Lorenzo at Rome, and the church of the Jesuits at Eystadt (Germany), are rivals in the claim of possessing his remains. Justin appears never to have assumed any ecclesiastical character, but to have made use of the philosophic dress in order to promulgate the doctrines of Christianity. He was a man of high devotedness in the cause of Christ; but a habit of speculation, derived from early education, rendered him in many respects an unsafe guide. From the Platonic system, which he had previously adopted, he transferred many opinions to Christianity. He believed, also, in the temporal restoration of the Jews to Jerusalem, and that the redeemed would dwell in that city, after the Resurrection, during a thousand years. He regarded the souls of the righteous as having been held till the Advent in the power of Satan, who could cause them to reäppear at his pleasure; and he held that

* Most ecclesiastical historians have agreed to place confidence in this account, handed down by Simeon the Metaphrast. It is not disfigured by the miraculous stories which are usually to be found in such accounts.

† Eusebius, lib. iv. c. 11. ‡ Irenæus.

till then the fallen spirits were ignorant of their condemnation, and had not been thrust down into their actual place of punishment. He regarded the virtuous heathen as having been witnesses to the truth before the Incarnation, and says that Socrates, Heraclitus, and others like them, may be regarded as Christians.*

Many works ascribed to Justin are spurious, or at least disputed. The only treatises supported by evidences of the highest class are his two Apologies, and the Dialogue with Trypho.† Several of his works are lost.

The courageous fortitude with which Christians sustained their persecutions at this trying season is worthy of our special notice. Justin bears the most distinct reference to their liberality, their contempt of death, their love of truth, their holiness of life, and their desire to extend the gospel.

One of the disciples of Justin was Tatian. From his master he had probably learned those germs of Platonic philosophy by which his Christianity became corrupted. Yet, so long as his instructor lived, he remained in communion with the church. After Justin's death, however, his mind became perverted with Gnostic tendencies, and lapsed into a belief in the efficacy of celibacy and renunciation of worldly property. Such views, indeed, began about this time to pervade Christians in all directions.

The dispute about the proper time for observing Easter considerably agitated the church at this period. The churches of Asia Minor believed that, as the Paschal lamb was a type of the sufferings of Christ, the day of the Passover — that is, the fourteenth day of the month Nisan — ought to be observed in commemoration of Christ's death. But this of necessity involved

* Dupin, Bibl. Patrum, art. Justin.

† The reader is referred to Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography for further details. The epistle to Diognetus, usually ascribed to Justin, is unquestionably of an earlier age. See Hefele, Prolegom. Bunsen's Hippolytus, &c.

that the feast would often fall on other days than Friday. In opposition to these views, the Western churches determined that the Friday was of greater importance in the commemoration than the precise position of the day in the month, and that the following Sunday ought to be devoted to the remembrance of the resurrection. Melito, Bishop of Sardis, appears as one of the authors who wrote much at this period, as also Claudius Apollinaris. Their works have perished.

It was perhaps about this time that the persecuted Christians began to use, for the dead bodies of their friends, those subterranean parts of ancient Rome since designated the Catacombs. Jerome, writing about the middle of the fourth century, describes them as they existed in his day; declaring that he "was accustomed, as a youth, when studying in Rome, to visit these dark and dreary spots on Sundays, in order to see the tombs of apostles and martyrs, and often to enter the crypts which are dry, in the depths of the earth, where the walls on each side of the visitors are lined with bodies of the dead, and all is so dark as to seem almost to fulfil the prophecy, 'They go down alive into hell;' for the light, being admitted at few intervals from above, and then not by a window but a hole, renders the darkness horrible, and, in advancing cautiously, surrounded by dark night, the line of Virgil occurs to the mind:

'Horror ubi animos simul ipsa silentia terrent.'" *

These excavations were first formed by quarrying the volcanic sandy rock, in order to supply the materials necessary for the buildings of ancient Rome. They were afterwards increased, in

* "All things were full of horror and affright,
And dreadful even the silence of the night."
DRYDEN'S VIRGIL, *Æneid*, I.

This quotation is made in Maitland's "Church in the Catacombs," from Jerome, who introduces it by a *tour de force* into his commentary on Ezekiel's Temple, declaring that the scene in the Catacombs gave him a distinct notion of those passages, "He had darkness under his feet," "His pavilion was darkness." — Psalms xcvii. and xviii.

order to procure the sand used for cement, until at length they formed an area of very extensive dimensions. They are mentioned by Horace and Varro, by Cicero and Suetonius. Originally infants, whose bodies were never burned by the Romans, and the poor, who were unable to afford the expense of cremation, were interred here. In a part of these caves, near the present Basilica of St. Stephen, the early Christians deposited their dead. As the "Arenarii," or sand-diggers, were among the poorer orders of the people, it is not unlikely that Christianity made many converts among them, as it usually did among the less opulent. It appears certain that the early Christian confessors were sometimes sentenced to sand-digging and stone-quarrying, as degrading punishments; and Romish traditions

CATACOMBS.

report that the baths of Diocletian were erected from materials thus procured. It is certain, however, that the first Roman disciples regarded these vaults as an asylum, the more secure because the tortuosity of the passages, which extended for fifteen

miles, made it easy to form them into a kind of labyrinth, and because the openings for egress as well as ingress were very numerous. Wells, found in certain parts of these grottoes, would supply not only water for thirst, but for baptism.

Among the sepulchral remains which the museum of the Vatican has derived from the catacombs is the following, found in the cemetery of Callistus, and strongly illustrative of early Christian history; it relates to the period of Marcus Aurelius, and the persecutions sanctioned by him.

ALEXANDER MORTVVS NON EST SED VIVIT SVPER ASTRA ET CORPVS IN HOC TUMVLO QUIESCIT VITAM EXPLEVIT SVB ANTONINO IMPº QVI VBI MVLTVM BENEFITII ANTEVENIRE

PRAEVIDERET PRO GRATIA ODIVM REDDIDIT GENVA ENIM FLECTENS VERO DEO SACRIFICATVRVS AD SUPPLICIA DVCITVR O TEMPORA INFAVSTA QUIBUS INTER SACRA ET VOTA NE IN CAVERNIS QUIDEM SALVARI POSSIMUS QUID MISERIVS VITA SED QUID MISERIUS IN MORTE CVM AB AMICIS ET PARENTIBUS SEPELIRI NEQVEANT TANDEM IN COELO CORVSCANT PARVM VIXIT QUI VIXIT IN X. TEM.

IN CHRIST.

Alexander is not dead, but lives beyond the stars, and his body rests in this tomb. He lived under the Emperor Antoninus, who, foreseeing that great benefit would result from his services, returned evil for good. For, while on his knees, and about to sacrifice to the true God, he was led away to execution. O sad times! in which sacred rites and prayers, even in caverns, afford no protection to us. What can be more wretched than such a life, and what than such a death? When they could not be buried by their friends and relations, at length they are resplendent in heaven. He has scarcely lived who has lived in Christian times.*

"A number of circumstances in this inscription are worthy of notice; the beginning, in which the first two words (Alexander mortuus), after leading us to expect a lamentation, break out into an assurance of glory and immortality; the description

* Maitland's "Church in the Catacombs," pp. 32, 33.

of the temporal insecurity in which the believers of that time lived; the difficulty of procuring Christian burial for the martyrs; the certainty of their heavenly reward; and, lastly, the concluding sentence, forcibly recalling the words of St. Paul, 'as dying, yet behold we live,' and again, 'I die daily.' It must be confessed that the epitaph does not directly affirm that Alexander was put to death on account of his religion, but would imply that the private hatred of the emperor found in it a pretext for his destruction."*

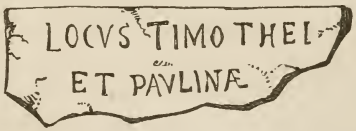
The addition of the names of the existing consuls to certain epitaphs renders it sometimes possible to fix the date with exactness.

AVRELIA DVLCISSIMA FILIA QVAE DE SAECVLO RECESSIT VIXIT ANN. XV. M. IIII. SEVERO ET QVINTIN. COSS.

Aurelia, our sweetest daughter, who departed from the world. Severus and Quintinus being consuls. She lived fifteen years and four months.

Sometimes a victorious crown — not a royal diadem, as popularly imagined, but one of laurel — is intended to mark that the interred had passed through the agony and strife of his Christian conflict, and was triumphant.

Sometimes the simplest words indicated the last bed of the departed, and remained a memorial of the affection or veneration of the survivors.




These tributes are sometimes imperfectly spelled, indicating to what class the survivors belonged, and that the early Christians were not distinguished by greatness.

* Maitland, p. 34.

"It may not be amiss to premise generally that in the inscriptions contained in the Lapidarian gallery, selected and arranged under Papal superintendence, there are no prayers for the dead, unless the forms, 'May you live,' 'May God refresh you,' be so construed; no addresses to the Virgin Mary, nor to the apostles or earlier saints, and, with the exception of 'eternal sleep,' 'eternal home,' no expression contrary to the plain sense of Scripture." *

The monogram signifying the first two letters of the word *XPIΣTOΣ*, frequently occurs in these inscriptions.

The following is another form of it, representing probably the triumphant end of some martyr whose robes were "made white in the blood of the Lamb."

Not less frequent are the following emblems: the fish, emblem of a Christian living in baptismal water; the dove, signifying peace; the anchor, hope; the ship, an allusion to St. Peter; the crown or palm branch, emblems of martyrdom. One inscription commemorates Exuperantius, the deacon; another, Candidus, the neophyte; another, Bacius Valerius, a catechumen; and many stones represent the Good Shepherd as carrying upon his shoulders the recovered sheep.

* Maitland, p. 34.

The Romanist traditions make mention of St. Praxedes, one of the daughters of Pudens, a Roman senator already mentioned, who lived at this period, and edified the church by her virtues. She, with her sister Pudentiana, spent considerable sums in burying the martyrs of the persecution under Aurelian.

SMYRNA.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### SMYRNA AND POLYCARP.

The persecution under Marcus Aurelius did not cease with the death of Justin, but extended itself to the Asiatic churches, and soon afterwards involved Polycarp, bishop of the church of Smyrna. We have already mentioned this city as one of the six churches immediately adjoining Ephesus, to which, together with that metropolis itself, special messages were addressed through the apostle John by the glorified Saviour. The prediction of coming trials was now to receive its accomplishment.

The situation of Smyrna is eminently delightful. At the head of a deep bay, the shores of which are varied by moun-

tains in every picturesque form, it was pronounced by Strabo to be the most beautiful city in Asia. Its streets were well arranged, its palaces superb, its population very numerous. It derived abundant fame from having been the birthplace of Homer, whose name was here canonized by a temple built to his memory. Smyrna boasted of high antiquity; but having been destroyed by the Lydians, it lay desolate during many years, till it was rebuilt by Alexander, who is reported to have been directed by a dream to found a city on the spot. By the ancients Smyrna was called "the lovely," "the ornament of Asia," "the crown of Ionia." It is still one of the most flourishing cities of the Turkish empire. "Here the traveller, in coming from Europe, first feels that he is in the East, — the land of his dreams. In the voluptuous air of soft Ionia, the novel vegetation, — the palm, loveliest of trees, gently waving in the perfumed air, — the clustering fig and pomegranate, — the camel, symbol of the desert, here seen for the first time, — all strike upon his senses with an intoxication of novelty impossible to describe."*

But the plagues and earthquakes to which Smyrna has been repeatedly subject have rendered its history not a little tragical. It has been rebuilt ten times, and the ruins of its ancient grandeur have been almost wholly removed from their original sites to aid in the construction of the modern city, which stands at some distance from the spot once occupied by its ancient predecessors.

The second Christian Bishop of Smyrna was Polycarp, who is reported to have received his appointment from the apostle John, his Christian instructor and father in Christ. It is not improbable that Polycarp was, as Usher supposes, the angel of the church to whom the message in the book of the Revelation was conveyed; if it were so, he must have occupied the post of

* Footsteps of our Lord and his Apostles, by W. H. Bartlett.

bishop over the church for seventy-four years.* It appears that Polycarp visited Rome during the episcopacy of Anicetus, with whom he is reported to have discussed the question then beginning to be agitated respecting the observance of Easter.† It was, however, a very friendly controversy; for Anicetus invited Polycarp to officiate in his own church. Whilst in Rome, he contended vigorously against the errors of Valentinus

* Certain it is that "he lived a long time and to a very advanced age." — Euseb., lib. IV. § xiv.

The author of the article *Polycarp*, in Smith's "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography," gives the following account of the bishop's early life, from the "Acta Sanctorum Januarii," some parts of which he thinks may be a genuine tradition :

"According to this account, the apostle Paul visited Smyrna in his way from Galatia, and, having collected the believers, instructed them in the proper time of keeping Easter. After Paul's departure, his host, Stratæus, the brother of Timotheus, became bishop of the infant church ; or (for the passage is not clear), Stratæus became an elder, and Bucolus was bishop. It was during the episcopate of Bucolus that Callisto, a female member of the church, was warned of God in a dream to go to the gate of the city called the Ephesian gate, where she would find a little boy named Polycarp, of Eastern origin, who had been reduced to slavery, and was in the hands of two men, from whom she was to redeem him. Callisto, obedient to the vision, rose, went to the gate, found the two men with the child, as it had been revealed to her ; and, having redeemed the boy, brought him home, educated him with maternal affection in the Christian faith, and, when he attained to manhood, first made him ruler over her house, then adopted him for her son, and finally left him heir to her wealth. Polycarp had been from childhood distinguished by his beneficence, piety and self-denial, by the gravity of his deportment, and his diligence in the study of the Holy Scriptures. These qualities early attracted the notice and regard of the bishop, Bucolus, who loved him with fatherly affection, and was in return regarded by him with filial love. By Bucolus he was ordained first to the office of deacon, in which he labored diligently, confuting heathens, Jews, and heretics ; delivering catechetical homilies in the church, and writing Epistles, of which that to the Philippians is the only extant specimen. He was subsequently, when of maturer age (his hair was already turning gray), and still maturer conduct, ordained presbyter by Bucolus, on whose death he was elected and consecrated bishop."

† Dupin. art. Polycarp.

and Marcion,* and, on meeting the latter in the streets, and being asked by him whether he remembered him (they had met before in Smyrna), Polycarp replied, "Yes, I know thee to be the first-born of Satan."

Polycarp was accustomed to relate to his disciples anecdotes respecting the sayings and doings of the apostles, especially those of John, his master; and when told of the heresies which began in his days to abound, he frequently exclaimed, with a spirit which, perhaps, set authority above argument, "To what times, O God, hast thou reserved me!" The errors of Marcion were indeed most grave, as they struck away large portions of the sacred volume. His views appear, however, to be attributable, not so much to a wicked heart, as to the too eager speculations of a mind full of unrest, and prone to lean to hypothesis rather than authority, even when that authority was divine.

When Ignatius visited Polycarp at Smyrna, on his way to Rome, he had been received with peculiar affection by his former fellow-disciple. Soon after this event, Polycarp wrote a letter to the church at Philippi, which is still preserved, and is a beautiful specimen of Christian antiquity, abounding with quotations from the writings of the apostles, enforcing strongly all practical virtues, and much resembling in some of its parts the epistles of John himself. An extract from this epistle may be given:†

"I therefore beseech you all that ye will be obedient to the word of righteousness, and that ye will exercise the same patience which ye have seen displayed before your eyes, not only

* Marcion's heresy was characterized in the last chapter. The manner in which similar doctrines were regarded by the early Christians may be learned from a passage in Justin Martyr. He speaks, with little discrimination, of "the Marcians, Valentinians, Basilidians, Saturnilians, and others, as atheists, impious and unjust, and excommunicated men, who do not really worship Jesus, but only confess him in words."—Dial. cum Tryphone, § xxxv.

† This epistle exists imperfectly in the Greek version.

in the blessed Ignatius, and Zosimus, and Rufus,* but also in others who were found among yourselves, and in Paul and the other apostles, in order that ye may be persuaded that these men did not receive in vain, but in truth and righteousness, and that they are in the place reserved for them with the Lord, with whom they also suffered. For they did not love this present world, but Him, who died for us, and on our behalf [rose again]. . . . I am much afflicted for Valens, who was once constituted a presbyter with you, because he proved himself so ignorant of the place which was given to him. I therefore exhort you to abstain from avarice, and to be just and truthful. Abstain yourselves from all evil. He who cannot govern himself, how shall he enforce this on others? He who does not abstain from avarice is guilty of idolatry, and shall be judged as one of the heathen. For who is ignorant of the judgment of the Lord? 'Do we not know that the saints shall judge the world?' as Paul teaches us. I have neither seen nor heard anything of this kind in you, among whom the blessed Paul labored, and who are applauded in the beginning of his letter. For he glories of you in all the churches, which alone had at that time known God; for then we ourselves did not know him. I truly grieve, brethren, both for him and his wife; to whom may God grant true repentance! Be moderate yourselves even in this matter, and 'count not' such as 'enemies,' but reclaim them as suffering and erring members, that you may save the whole body. For in doing this you will build up yourselves."† In the conclusion of the letter he mentions that he had sent with it "the letter of Ignatius which he sent to me, as well as other letters, which we possess, at your desire," and asks to be informed

* According to the Roman martyrology, the commemorative day of Zosimus and Rufus was observed at Philippi on the 18th December. — Hefele, p. 268.

† Hefele, Patres Apost. pp. 272, 273.

of anything the Philippians might know of the martyr himself.*

The rescript of Marcus Aurelius, under which Polycarp probably suffered, is thus characterized by Neander: "If now we put together all that is most peculiar in the character of the persecutions of this time, we find two things particularly worthy of notice: *first*, that *search* was made for the Christians, by express command; although, indeed, such search was often anticipated by the popular fury. We have seen above that, according to Trajan's rescript, the Christians had been expressly distinguished from those criminals for whom it was the duty of the provincial authorities to make search. Now, on the contrary, diligent search was made for them; and, to save their lives, they were often obliged to conceal themselves. as appears both from several accounts of the persecutions, and from the assertions of Celsus. In the second place, the practice hitherto had been this — *when the Christians were accused, if after repeated summons they persisted in refusing to deny their faith, then they were executed without torture.* Now it was attempted to force them to recant by the use of torture. An edict, which agrees in all respects with this practice, is still extant, under the name of the Emperor Aurelian (conjectured to stand for Aurelius), and, as in style and matter it bears every mark of authenticity, may doubtless be the edict against the Christians originally addressed by the Emperor Aurelius to the presidents of the provinces. It runs thus:

"'We have heard that the laws are violated by those who in our times call themselves Christians. Let them be arrested; and, unless they offer to the gods, let them be punished with divers tortures; yet so that justice may be mingled with severity, and that the punishment may cease as soon as the end is gained of extirpating the crime.'

* These letters have probably perished, and are not to be identified with those which bear their name.

"The last clause is altogether in the character of Marcus Aurelius. The governors were to keep steadily in view the one object, which was to put down Christianity, as being at variance with the religion of the state, and to bring men back to the worship of the Roman gods. The magistrates were charged, indeed, not to act on the promptings of blind passion; but such a caution was plainly insufficient to restrain them from cruel and arbitrary measures."*

This edict appears to have been enforced in Asia Minor, not so much by the zeal of the proconsul himself, as by the ungovernable fury of the heathen populace. Instigated by the excited multitude, that officer put every ascertained Christian to a violent death. The stadium (appropriated to public games) witnessed continual victims; many were exposed to beasts of prey, and others were burned. Some of these executions called forth the pity even of the heathen spectators. But the courage of the Christians was proof even against all torments. "Who did not admire the nobleness and patience, and love to God, of those who were so lacerated with scourges that the structure of their body might be seen even to the hidden veins and arteries, yet they bore it with courage; so much so, that even the bystanders pitied and lamented, whilst no one of them either moaned or groaned; showing to all that as martyrs for Christ in that very hour in which they were tormented they were beyond the sufferings of the flesh, or rather, that God with his help was present with them, and, waiting for the grace of Christ, they spurned the sufferings of the flesh, redeeming themselves from eternal pain by the torments of a single hour.† The fire of their cruel executioners seemed cold to them. For they had before their eyes the prospect of escape from that fire which is eternal, and can never be extinguished, and with the eyes of their minds they

* Neander's Ch. Hist.; Bohn's ed. vol. I. p. 129.

† The reader will mark in this, and in other passages of a similar kind, the first germs of a belief in the meritoriousness of suffering.

looked for those good things which are reserved for the suffering, 'which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man.'" *

Some of these martyrs were transfixed on sharp shells or impaled on spears; and, when exhausted by suffering, were thrown to the wild beasts. Among them a youth of noble birth, named Germanicus, was especially distinguished. The proconsul endeavored to persuade him to renounce his Christianity, urging on him the consideration of his youth, and entreating him to spare himself. But, instead of yielding to these solicitations, he irritated the beasts of prey, that his tortures might be more quickly terminated. At length the multitude cried out, "Take away the atheists; let Polycarp be sought!" On this occasion, a Phrygian named Quintus, who had professed Christianity, "made shipwreck." Terrified by the tumult, he forgot the loud and boasting professions he had previously made, and was flattered by the proconsul into a denial of his religion.

When news was brought to Polycarp of his danger, he was perfectly calm, and refused to leave the city. But the persuasion of his friends at length induced him to retire to a neighboring village, where he took refuge in a farm-house, and spent his whole time in praying by day and night for the universal church, according to his usual practice. One morning he told his friends that, whilst he was praying, the pillow under his head seemed to be on fire; and he then said, prophetically, "I must be burned alive." He was, however, prevailed upon to retreat (as one of his servants, under the torture, had discovered the place of his retirement), and to seek another asylum. At length, however, whilst the aged man was taking repose in an upper room, his enemies found out his abode. Though escape was yet possible, Polycarp refused to make the necessary effort, saying, "The will of the Lord be done;" and he made himself known to his pursuers. His venerable appearance, together with the cheer-

* Eccles. Smyrnæ lit. de Polycarpi Martyrio, § ii.

fulness and firmness of his address, impressed even his enemies with admiration. Polycarp, with generous hospitality, ordered food to be set before them, pressing them to partake of it; and he only asked that they would allow him one unmolested hour for prayer. This being granted, the holy man offered, standing, a fervent supplication for all whom he had ever known or loved, and for the universal church, whilst the bystanders were so much impressed by his devotion that they could not refrain from expressing their regret at being obliged to conduct so remarkable a saint to death. Polycarp's devotions ended, they placed him on an ass, and conducted him towards the city.

As he thus approached Smryna, he was met by Herod the Irenarch, the chief officer of police, who was seated in a chariot with his father Nicetes. Desirous of conversation, they took Polycarp into the vehicle with them. "What injury will it do thee," said they, "to say Lord Cæsar, and to offer sacrifice? Thou wilt thus be safe." Polycarp answered nothing. The question was repeated. "I cannot do," said the saint, "what you ask of me." Irritated by the failure of their attempt, they abused him, and threw him violently out of the chariot, wounding his thigh. Heedless of the pain, however, the old man cheerfully walked on, and was conducted to the stadium. His arrival there produced a great sensation among the people, who, it would appear, had been already collected. The proconsul inquired if his name were Polycarp, and urged him by the consideration of his age to renounce Christ, and to swear by the genius of Cæsar.* "Repent," he exhorted, "say, away with the impious!" The countenance of the old man grew grave and severe. He looked around on the multitude who were intent on his destruction; then, pointing to them, he said, with uplifted eyes, "Away with the impious!" The proconsul still urged him to renounce Christ. "Renounce Christ!" said the aged patriarch; "I have served him eighty-six years, and he

* Epictetus said that each one had his demon, — the inward prophet indicating good and evil. Arrian, Epict., ii. 7. 2.

never wronged me; how can I now reproach my King and Saviour?"

Still the proconsul entreated him, "Swear by the genius of Cæsar!" At length the bishop said, "I am a Christian! If thou desirest to learn what is the Christian religion, appoint me a day and hear!" Though it was evidently the desire of the proconsul to spare the aged man, his difficulty lay in appeasing the multitude. He therefore replied to Polycarp, "Endeavor to persuade the people."

*Poly.* "I feel bound to give an account of myself to *thee*, for our religion teaches us to give due honor to the powers ordained of God, as far as possible. But I hold *these* unworthy of any reason I might render."

*Proc.* "I have wild beasts ready. Unless thou repentest I will expose thee to them."

*Poly.* "Let them come! We are not accustomed to repent with that repentance which changes from better to worse. On the contrary, I hold it good to pass from worse to better."

*Proc.* "Since thou despisest beasts, I will cause thee to be consumed by fire, unless thou changest thy mind."

*Poly.* "The fire thou threatenest burns for an hour and is soon afterwards extinguished. Thou knowest not that penal fire of future judgment and punishment which is reserved for the ungodly. But why dost thou delay? Do thy will!"

The proconsul was perplexed. The firmness and beaming countenance of the Christian martyr embarrassed the heathen magistrate. He sent, however, a herald to proclaim up and down the stadium the mortal fact, — "Polycarp has confessed that he is a Christian!" Jews and Gentiles set up a universal shout, — "This is the teacher of Asia! This is the father of the Christians! This is the overturner of our gods! This is he who teaches people to sacrifice and not to adore the gods!" They asked the Asiarch, as the president of the games, that a lion might be set loose upon Polycarp. But the Asiarch refused, for the gladiatorial spectacles were ended. A universal

demand then arose that Polycarp should be burned alive. The consent was granted, and the preparations were instantly made. Wood and straw were collected by the populace from the workshops and baths, — the Jews being the most eager in the movement.* The pile was soon complete. Polycarp, laying aside his outer vestments, and loosening his girdle, began to take off his shoes, — an office usually performed for him by some one of his disciples, who showed by the slight attention their respect for him and his office. The apparatus of death was placed around him. But when they were about to nail him to the stake, the aged Christian said, "Suffer me to be thus. For He who allows me to undergo the fire will enable me to remain unmoved without your fastenings." Instead of being nailed, he was, therefore, only bound.

The spectacle was most sublime; though it has been often since repeated. With his hands behind him the patriarch uttered a last prayer: — "Omnipotent Lord God, Father of Thy beloved and blessed son, Jesus Christ, through whom we have received the knowledge of Thee; God of angels, and powers, and of all creatures, and of the family of the just who live in Thy sight; I bless Thee that on this day and hour thou hast counted me worthy to make one of the number of Thy martyrs, to partake of the cross of Christ, and to look for the resurrection to eternal life both of soul and body, through the power of the Holy Spirit, praying that I may be received to-day among the number of thy saints, as a rich and acceptable sacrifice, according as Thou the true God hast prepared me by Thy forewarnings and their fulfilment. Therefore, for all things, I bless and glorify Thee, through the everlasting and heavenly Jesus Christ, Thy beloved son; with whom, to Thee, and the Holy Spirit, be glory, now and through all ages. Amen."

The attendants now set fire to the pile, and the flames rose furiously: † but either a light wind blew away the flames from

* They usually bore a most prominent part in similar transactions.

† The account of the miraculous appearance of the fire, which was said

the martyr, or, from some other cause, his body did not consume. The confector, therefore, whose business it was to destroy unmanageable beasts in the arena, was ordered to stab the old man to death. So perished Polycarp, in a death which is one of the most impressive upon record! "The noble army of martyrs praise Thee!"

The Christians endeavored to obtain the remains of their murdered bishop. To prevent this, they were again placed in the flames and consumed. But the zeal of Polycarp's disciples gathered up his ashes.

Though the narration, of which the above is the substance, dwells with especial emphasis on the martyrdom of Polycarp himself, eleven Philadelphians suffered with him.

The death of Polycarp gave peace to his flock. The insane eagerness which at first possessed the multitude had now become glutted with victims, and the proconsul took care to give them no new stimulus.*

It was probably about this time that Hermas, whom the similarity of names led some of the Fathers to conclude to be the companion of the apostle Paul, produced his "Pastor," if it be not entirely an imposture. Its style of extravagant allegory is extremely unlike the apostolic age.†

Before we close this chapter it is necessary to notice a narrative which may be found in the pages of Eusebius and Tertullian, and which relates to a transaction well known to the students of ecclesiastical history by the name of the "thundering legion."

The following is the relation of Eusebius:

to have formed an arch around the martyr, like the sails of a ship; the appearance of the body in the flames, as if it had been pure gold; and of the fragrant odor diffused around, may be safely omitted, since it is attested by no divine authority, as referable to the imagination of some of the spectators.

* The materials of this narrative are in Eusebius, and in the circular epistle of the church at Smyrna. — Hefele, Pat. Apos. p. 275.

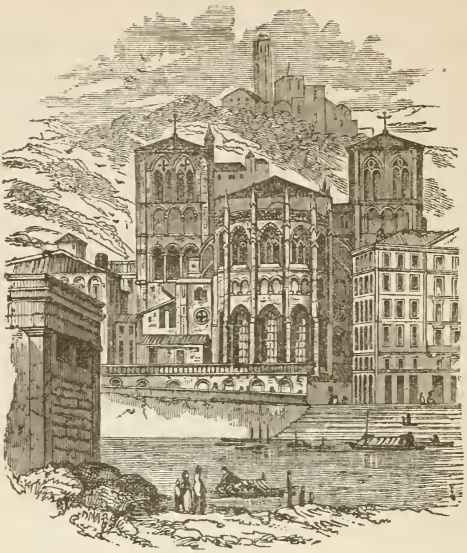
† See Hefele, — Prologomena.

"It is said that when Marcus Aurelius Cæsar was about to engage in battle with the Germans and Sarmatians, he and his army were overcome by thirst, and were greatly distressed, when those soldiers that belonged to the Melitine legion, as it was called, by a belief surviving from that time to the present, bent their knees upon the earth whilst drawn up in battle array against the enemy, according to our custom of prayers, and lifted up their supplications to God. But this being a marvellous spectacle to the enemy, a still more singular circumstance is reported to have immediately taken place; the lightning drove the enemy into flight and destruction, while a shower came down and refreshed the God-invoking army, the whole of which was on the point of perishing with thirst. This history is related, indeed, by historians who are strangers to our doctrine, who, however, took an interest in the writings of those whom we have mentioned; and it is also stated by our own writers, whilst the wonderful event is also added by historians who differ from our faith, but who do not admit that this happened by the prayers of our party. But the fact is handed down on record by our brethren, as lovers of truth, in a plain and undisguised manner. Of these we might mention Apollinaris, who says that from that time the legion at whose prayers the wonder took place received an appellation appropriate to the event from the emperor, being called the *fulminea*, or 'thundering legion.'" *

Tertullian refers, also, to "letters of that most harsh emperor, Marcus Aurelius, in which he bears witness that the thirst of his army in Germany was possibly stopped by the rain, granted in answer to the prayers of the Christians." † He says again, "Marcus Aurelius, too, in the German war, when the prayers of the Christian soldiers were made to God, obtained showers to relieve their thirst." ‡

* κεραυνοβόλον. — Euseb. lib. v. c. 5. † Tertull., Apoleget. c. § v.
‡ Tertull., in Scapulam, c. iv.

But many difficulties beset this narrative, and have been pointed out by successive ecclesiastical historians. The name "fulminea," said by Eusebius to have been given to the legion in token of this event, is proved to have existed as early as the time of Augustus. Dio Cassius, enumerating the legions, speaks of "the twelfth, that in Cappadocia, the thundering one." The war with the Alemanni and Quadri, which is fixed as the date of this event, took place in A. D. 175; and the next chapter will show that at that date the persecution of the Christians was by no means suspended, as Eusebius asserts it to have been in consequence of this transaction. So that the inference that a season of peace was granted to the believers, because of the impression derived from the miracle of the "thundering legion" on the mind of Marcus Aurelius, is by no means warranted. The whole story was probably a fiction; and even the language of Tertullian, cited above, is not positive, though he, perhaps, believed the narration.



LYONS.

## CHAPTER IX.

### LYONS AND IRENÆUS.

The excitable and insurrectionary town of Lyons, which has figured so prominently in all the revolutionary histories of modern France, is the first point at which the traveller from Paris, journeying southward, encounters the remnants of the ancient Roman empire. It was anciently constituted by Augustus the capital of Celtic Gaul, then called by the name of Lugdumensis; was entirely burnt, and rebuilt in the days of Nero; and, when that emperor was pursued by the hatred of the Roman people, formed an almost singular exception to the mass of the inhabitants of the empire, by manifesting zeal and

devotion in his cause. The notoriety which it afterwards acquired as the seat of early Protestantism, when the Romish church afterwards corrupted by its errors the pure faith of the gospel, had been foreshadowed by the zeal it had displayed in the cause of Christianity in the early ages of the church. The Emperor Claudius, who was born in it, bestowed on it important privileges, and promoted it to the dignity of a colony. Hither Domitian came, when Vitellius was overthrown, to maintain, by the aid of its inhabitants, the authority of Vespasian, his father.

By what means the gospel was first introduced into Gaul is uncertain. It is probable that the commercial facilities which the river Rhone afforded may have led to its early importation from the churches of Asia Minor. We have already mentioned the legend that Mary of Magdala, with some of her Christian sisters, came to settle at Marseilles. Small credit is, however, due to this tradition.

One of the first authentic events connected with ecclesiastical history in this district is the death of Symphorian, which took place in the town of Augustodunum, now Autun. The facts relative to it were the following: A festival was held in honor of Cybele, whose worship had been probably derived from Asia Minor; and, at this commemoration, an image of the goddess was carried in procession. One Christian alone, named Symphorian, refused to pay to it the homage which the popular feeling exacted. He was seized, and conducted before the tribunal of the governor. "Are you a Christian?" was the peremptory inquiry to which he was subjected. The charge in that district was equally unprecedented and alarming. "I am a Christian," was the answer; "I worship the true God, who reigns in heaven, but your idol I cannot worship; nay, if permitted, I will dash it in pieces on my own responsibility!" The protester was declared guilty of having rejected the religion, and of having broken the laws, of the state; and Symphorian received the sentence of death. Few as were the

Christians in that territory, there was one, however, who sympathized with the denounced criminal; — it was his mother! Seeing her son led forth to crucifixion, she cried out, "My son, my son, keep the living God in thy heart. Be steadfast. There is nothing fearful in the death which conducts thee to life. My son, let thy heart be above; look up to Him who dwells in heaven. Thy life is not to-day taken from thee, but raised to a better. Thou art this day passing, by a blessed exchange, to the life of heaven!"

At the time of which we write, the celebrated Irenæus, a Greek, was presbyter of Lyons, which, with its adjacent city, Vienne, was distinguished by its possession of gospel truth. A disciple of Polycarp, Irenæus had early learned from that venerable Christian the doctrines of life and salvation. He himself describes the impression which the lessons of his instructor made upon his mind: "What we heard in childhood," says he, "goes along with the soul, and becomes one with it; so that I can describe the place where the blessed Polycarp sat and spake; his goings in and out; his manner of life, his form, his conversations with the people, and his familiar intercourse with John, as he was accustomed to tell, as also his familiarity with those that had seen the Lord. How also he used to relate their discourses, and what things he had heard from them concerning the Lord. Also concerning his miracles, — his doctrine, — all these were told by Polycarp, in consistency with the Holy Scriptures, as he had received them from the eye-witnesses of the doctrine of salvation. These things, by the mercy of God, and the opportunity then afforded me, I attentively heard, noting them down, not on paper, but in my heart; and these same facts I am always in the habit, by the grace of God, of recalling faithfully to mind."* On the martyrdom of Pothinus, Bishop of Lyons, whose death the present chapter will relate, Irenæus succeeded him as bishop.

* Euseb. v. § x. (Bagster's ed.)

The persecutions of Marcus Aurelius extended, in the second century, into these regions of Gaul, and raged with great severity. Christians were prohibited from appearing in public, and even from frequenting the baths and the market. The populace rose against them; plundered their houses, stoned their persons, and loaded them with every kind of indignity. They were dragged before the tribunals under the accusation of being Christians, and on their confession of the fact were imprisoned with great severity. One Christian, Veltius Epigathus, a man of quality, and of extraordinary integrity and piety, roused by the insults heaped on the community, undertook to prove that this rage was unjust, and that the Christians were neither atheists nor wicked persons. But this only excited still more the indignation of the people; and the question was directly put to him if he were a Christian. As he acknowledged that title, he was put to death. He bore the sentence with the utmost cheerfulness. But his courage was not imitated by all who professed the name of Jesus; some of the weaker brethren gave way in the moment of trial, thereby causing great discouragement to their companions, who trembled not so much from the fear of suffering as at the danger of apostasy. Yet the backsliding of the timid was abundantly supplied by a fresh accession of those whom no fear of martyrdom could deter from an avowal of their true character. The persecution was deepened by the defection of some of the heathen servants from the side of their Christian masters. These men, when brought within view of the tortured Christians, declared, at the instigation of the military persons who guarded them, that the Christians were accustomed to eat human flesh, and to perpetrate other abominable crimes. Sanctus, a deacon, and Maturus, a recent convert, suffered peculiar torments. The former, on being examined, refused to tell his name or condition, whether it were that of a freeman or a slave; replying to every interrogation, "I am a Christian," and declaring this to be his only and sufficient representation. This martyr had red-hot brazen plates affixed to his body, till

his form was so burnt and shrivelled as not to retain the similitude of the human figure; and when, after some days, his wounds were so inflamed that he could not bear a hand to touch them, he was yet exposed to a repetition of the same tortures. After this, he and Maturus were brought into the amphitheatre. They were beaten; were exposed to wild beasts; were made to sit in a heated iron chair, till the spectators could scarcely endure the disgusting odor of their burning bodies Still Sanctus would not utter a word more than he had already pronounced, saying continually, as before, "I am a Christian!" At length death mercifully released these servants of Christ, and the agonies of the cross yielded to the glories of the crown.

Well does Tertullian say, in reference to such scenes,—"Crudelitas vestra gloria est nostra." "Your cruelty is our glory!"*

Blandina was a slave, possessed of a weak constitution, who had been the domestic of a martyred mistress. Great fears were entertained lest she should yield to the terrors of her position. But it was far otherwise. She was tortured to such an extent that the executioners declared themselves exhausted by the work they performed, yet without moving the firmness of this servant of the Lord. Her body was torn and laid open in every direction; but her declaration, amidst every variety of suffering, uniformly was, "I am a Christian, and no evil is committed among us!" She was suspended on a cross and exposed to beasts, herself praying most earnestly. But the beasts did not touch her.

The denial of Christ, into which many had been terrified through fear of martyrdom, did not avail to screen them from injury. In many cases the recusants were exposed to greater sufferings than some even of the confessors themselves; the pangs of a mind ill at ease being superadded to their other tortures. So that even the spectators could not fail to mark the

* In Scapulam.

contrast between the downcast visages of the traitors and the calm and heroic courage of the suffering Christians; whilst the believers, who witnessed the scorn with which even the heathens regarded the pusillanimity of the backsliders, were thereby encouraged to a bolder confession of their risen Lord.

Biblias was one who had been tempted by fear of torture into a denial of her Christian faith. But her inconstancy was only momentary; and, being exposed to suffering in order to prompt her to further discoveries, she recovered her courage; and, when an accusation of the brethren was demanded of her, said, "How can it be that they eat infants, when it is not lawful for them to taste the blood of any animal?" She died a martyr.

Pothinus was, as we have seen, bishop of the church at Lyons. He was now ninety years old, and was extremely infirm, yet a martyr's courage burned brightly within his soul. The soldiers bore him before the judicial tribunal, the multitude execrating him "as if he had been Christ himself." When asked "Who is the Christian God?" his reply was, "When thou art worthy thou shalt know." He suffered the extremest insults; he was bruised by the hands and feet of those who could reach him, whilst the more distant threw at him all kinds of missiles, till life was almost extinct. He was then thrown into prison, where, after two days, he died.

The cries of the multitude were loud for Attalus, a native of Pergamus, a man held in great esteem among the Christians. He was exhibited to the mob, wearing a tablet, whereon was written, "This is Attalus the Christian." Like Paul, he was a Roman citizen, and the legate thought it wiser to report him, and others who pleaded the same privilege, to the capital, and to await the emperor's orders respecting them. The reply was, that those who recanted should be liberated, but that on the rest the law should take its course. As a general festival was held about this time in the city of Lyons, the legate chose the season to bring the backsliders before the populace, that the

mob might enjoy the pleasure of hearing the Christians traduced by their former associates. They were therefore submitted to a last interrogation before their release. To the surprise and consternation of the multitude, many of them now confessed their Christianity, and few maintained their previous apostasy. The rage of the bystanders was extreme. These men were immediately put to death: some by exposure to wild beasts; those who were Roman citizens by beheading. In the course of their examination, a physician, a native of Phrygia, named Alexander, had happened to stand near the tribunal, where he encouraged the apostate Christians boldly to assert their faith. He too was seized, and conducted, together with Attalus, to the tribunal. They underwent a variety of torments, during which Attalus neither spoke nor groaned, but looked as one already translated to heaven. Attalus was placed upon the heated chair. In the midst of his tortures he cried out to the multitude: "This is the way in which ye devour men; but we neither devour them, nor do any kind of evil." When asked "What is the name of God?" he composedly exclaimed, "God has not a name, as men have."

The last day of the spectacles was now arrived. Blandina was again exposed, together with Ponticus, a youth of fifteen. They had been daily brought to witness the torments of the others, and had been repeatedly urged to renounce their faith. Still refusing, the people became incensed, and the executioners heaped on them every variety of torture. Ponticus soon died, encouraged during his sufferings by the exhortations of his sister, who was in the crowd. But Blandina yet held out. She had been whipped, torn by beasts, scorched by the iron chair; at length she was enclosed in a net, and thrown to a wild bull. Her agony was thus ended. "Even her enemies confessed that no woman existed among them who could have endured such great and numerous tortures."

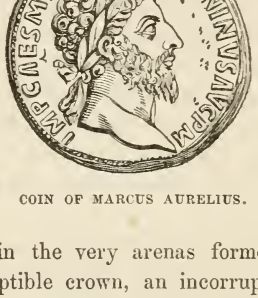
The mind sickens at the recital of such sufferings. But the rage of the brutal mob was not yet appeased. Many bodies of

those who had been stifled in close and unwholesome prisons were thrown to dogs, and great vigilance was exercised lest the Christians should possess themselves of any of the remains of their companions. Mangled portions, such as decapitated heads, separated limbs, and scorched trunks, were exhibited in various parts of the city, watched by soldiers, and derided by spectators, though regarded with pity by others, who could not refrain from sorrowfully asking what good such men had derived from their religion. The answer was found only in a doctrine of which these men had no conception — a future life! The remains of the bodies of the Christian martyrs were burned, and their ashes thrown into the Rhone, whilst they exclaimed, "Let us see now whether they will rise again, and whether their God will come to them and take them out of our hands."

"These things," says the document, the course of which we have closely followed, "befell the church in the time of the before-named emperor [Marcus Aurelius], from which a conjecture may be formed of the occurrences in other parts of the empire."

Never was the power of Christianity more gloriously displayed than during this fearful visitation. The modesty, the meekness, the magnanimity of the sufferers, were superhuman. They uttered no upbraiding word; they neither showed revenge towards those who persecuted them, nor enmity towards those who betrayed. They died in peace and in prayer, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer in the name of Him who, "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God;" and we are informed that, though many suffered greatly for Christ, they rejected, with a noble humility, the name of martyrs, and reproved those who gave them that designation. What must have been that heathenism which could reject such demonstrations of power and love? And what that Christianity which, in the hope of "a better resurrection," could render the spirit indifferent to such excruciating sufferings of the body? If some symptoms of a declining

religion had begun about this season of the church's history to develop themselves, such instances as these, by teaching the grandeur of first principles, would exhibit more vividly the doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ's name; would tend to break the ties which bound Christians to the unholy; would brighten their hopes and promote their communion with a world to come. Such are those "of whom the world is not worthy." Glorious is that religion by means of which these primitive




COIN OF MARCUS AURELIUS.

believers found, in the very arenas formed for contests in behalf of a corruptible crown, an incorruptible! Such were the transactions in the reign of an emperor whose boast was, that "the people were happy whose philosophers were kings, or whose kings were philosophers."*

In the year 193 Marcus Aurelius was succeeded by his son Commodus. This detestable miscreant, intent upon his own vices and incredible follies, was induced, through the influence of his mistress, Marcia, to abstain from persecuting the Christians.† Yet, as no express law existed in their favor, the

* Did Gibbon mean to excuse Marcus Aurelius' cruel persecutions when he said, "During the whole course of his reign he despised the Christians as a philosopher, and punished them as a sovereign"?

† See next chapter but one. Marcia regarded her protection of Christianity probably as a kind of atonement for her sins. The case is not uncommon.

duration of their tolerance was extremely uncertain, and it was greatly dependent upon local accidents. But when Arrius Montanus, proconsul of Asia, began a *theomachia* (a fighting against God), to use a portable phrase happily adopted by Tertullian* from Gamaliel, all the Christian inhabitants of his vicinity presented themselves before his tribunal, to show how great was their number, and to warn him against the consequences of commencing proceedings. This course was attended with the desired effect. The proconsul, calling some of them near to him, contented himself with this reproach: "Slaves, if ye will die, have ye not precipices and ropes for that purpose?" In some quarters the course of martyrdom went on as before.

The reign of Commodus was short: his welcome assassination took place in A. D. 192. Then followed an interval of tumult and disorder, during which four names of emperors are found on the annals of the distracted Roman empire, and the Christians suffered greatly from the consequent disorganizations. At length, in the year 193, Septimus Severus was proclaimed by the army, and soon afterwards victoriously ascended the throne.

Tertullian relates that Severus had been healed when sick by the anointing† of one Proculus, surnamed Torpacion, whom he retained in his family till his death, and that by this man the Prince Caracalla was educated in the knowledge of Christianity. He adds that "Severus, knowing that many distinguished men and women were of this sect, not only did not injure the Christians, but even distinguished them by his favor, and kept back the people, who were raging against us."‡ But this peace was not universal: for elsewhere Tertullian mentions the renewal of the old charges of infanticide and incest against the Christians;§ speaks of their being impaled on crosses and stakes; their bodies being torn by nails, and tormented by sharp instru-

* In Scapulam: "Velim ut omnes salvos facere possimus, monendo μη θεομαχειν."

† James 5 : 14.

‡ Tertull. in Scapulum, sect. iv.

§ Apologet. vii.

ments; their being thrown to beasts, burned with fire, and banished to remote islands,* or consigned to the mines; and concludes with this striking address to the persecutors of his brethren:

"Pursue this course, ye good (?) governors, held in increasing esteem among the people if ye immolate the Christians to them; torture, rack, condemn, tear us to pieces. Your wickedness is the proof of our innocence; for this cause God allows us thus to suffer, and . . . you have confessed that a stain on our chastity is more terrible to us than punishment or death. No cruelty of yours, however exquisite it may be, will be of advantage to you; it is rather an enticement to our cause. The more you mow us down, the more powerful we are; the blood of Christians is as seed.† Many of your men exhort to the endurance of pain and death, — as Cicero, Seneca, Diogenes, Pyrrhon, Callinicus. But their instructions cannot gain so many disciples as Christians make who teach by deeds. The very obstinacy you reprehend is an instructress. For who is not driven by beholding it to ask what is the inward principle of it? Who, when he has inquired, does not come over to us? Who, having come over to us, does not desire to suffer, that he may experience the whole grace of God, that he may purchase all freedom from him at the price of his blood? for all faults are forgiven for this deed.‡ Therefore it is that we give thanks to you for your judicial sentences; for there is such a rivalry between the human and the divine, that when we are condemned by you we are absolved by God."§

We have already mentioned the name of Irenæus in connection with the church at Lyons. The place and time of the birth of this "light of the Western Gauls," as Theodoret calls him,

* Ib. xii.

† This is probably the original of the well-known motto: "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."

‡ Another instance of the false doctrine we have elsewhere indicated.

§ Tertull. Apol. L.

are conjectural. It is probable that he was a native of Smyrna, and was born between A. D. 120 and 140. His eminence is greatly derived from the opposition offered by him to the heresies of the period. Some of these deserve a transient notice, though the nature of the present work forbids an enlarged or elaborate reference.

The Gnostics derived their name from γνῶσις (knowledge), a term originally employed by heathen philosophers to distinguish those who possessed the secrets of wisdom from the vulgar and ignorant, and applied afterwards by Christian writers to mark an "intellectual" knowledge of Christianity, as distinguished from a more ordinary and literal faith. Opposed to Judaism, and hence to the doctrines of the Ebionites and Nazarenes, as forms of religion degraded by contact with the material, Gnosticism allied itself to philosophy wherever it found it, whether in the Jewish Cabbala or the oriental theosophy, but principally to the Greek philosophy,* and exhibited various varieties, according to the proportion in which either of these systems was predominant.

"The philosophical basis of this speculation was the old question, πόθεν τὸ κακόν (whence comes evil?). In proportion as the idea of the highest divinity had developed itself, the less did philosophy believe itself right in venturing to consider him as a world-creator (δημιουργός), and the more strongly was it disposed to derive the important good in the world from a lower being, but the evil from an evil principle. Among the speculating Christians these ideas maintained a firm existence in the Christian view taken of Christianity, Judaism, and Heathenism, as the complete, the incomplete, and the evil. These three religions appeared as revelations of three corresponding principles, which were first perceived in their true light from the position of Christianity. Matter (ὕλη) was the evil principle, which, considered either with original or first-developed con-

* Hippolytus strongly asserts this. De Hæres.

sciousness, had revealed itself in heathenism. The creation of the world belonged, according to Gen. i., to the God of the Jews, who, commonly regarded as the first of the seven-planet princes, proceeded from the highest God only at an infinite distance, and was as incapable of willing the perfect as of restraining the opposition of matter. On the other hand, the highest divinity was revealed by Christ, who, elevated above all beings, had produced out of himself only the world of light, — a world of blessed spirits. Human spirits (πνεύματα) are rays of light proceeding from this blessed spirit, whose object is consequently to free themselves from the fetters of the demiurgus and matter, in order that they may return into the world of light. To effect this was the object of Christ, who was thought by most Gnostics to be one of the highest spirits of light. As the means of doing so, he left behind to his genuine disciples the γνῶσις. These general ideas were carried out specifically in the separate schools, on which account they received different forms and modifications." *

The Gnostic system was first broached by Simon Magus,† and by Menander, his pupil. It was also held by Nicolaus, founder of the sect called Nicolaitanes, and identified by Hippolytus ‡ with one of the seven deacons of the Acts of the Apostles, who appears to have exhibited it in a licentious form, which set at defiance the rules of moral obligation. Saturnilus, or Saturninus, and Basilides, gave to Gnosticism an Asiatic, and perhaps an Egyptian, costume. Theodotus, the banker, founder of the Melchisedecites, based his system, probably, on the 110th Psalm, contending that Christ descended on Jesus, the latter being merely a man. Besides these were Certo, Lucianus, and Hermogenes, with many others.

One of the most distinguished of these Gnostical teachers

* Gieseler's Eccl. Hist., Clarke's edition, sect. 44.

† This opinion, though denied, is doubtless the correct one. See Hippol. adv. Hæres. passim.

‡ Hippol. adv. Hæres., sect. XXI.

was Valentinus, whom we have already mentioned. His doctrines were so clouded in mystery as to be extremely difficult to seize, and they were held, as Tertullian tells us, with great dissimulation.* The following is the description given by Hippolytus of the Valentinian heresy:

"For the beginning of their system is an unbegotten, incorruptible, inconceivable, incomprehensible, creative Monad, the cause of the existence of all existing things. This said Monad is called by them the Father: and here may be discerned a great difference between them (that is, the various systems), for some of them, that they may retain the Pythagorean doctrine of Valentinus in its purity, believe it masculine and unmatched, and that it is the Father alone; others add a Syzygos, or consort." †

By this extract the reader will have ascertained enough regarding this blasphemous doctrine, and we may well spare him further details.

Against these Gnostic heresies, Irenæus, "the blessed presbyter," ‡ composed a treatise in five books. As these questions are, except to the learned, mainly devoid of interest, we shall not attempt an analysis of that laborious production, originally written in Greek, but now preserved only in Latin. Yet some of its points are worthy of remark. Irenæus complains of the manner in which these heretics quoted scripture, which, he declares, it is impossible to understand aright except by means of tradition! However naturally such a sentiment might come from one who had sat at the feet of apostles themselves, we here behold the commencement of an error which has proved, since that day, full of deadly poison. "We have not received," says the Bishop of Lyons, "the gospel by letters alone, but by the living voice; as Paul has said, 'We speak wisdom among them that are perfect, yet not the wisdom of this world.' And

* Adv. Marcionem.

† Hippol. adv. Hæres. p. 185.

‡ Prolegomena, vi. 41.

when we meet them * (the heretics) by the tradition which is from the apostles, and which is kept in churches by the succession of presbyters,† they oppose the tradition, saying that they are not only wiser than presbyters, but even than the apostles themselves."

Other errors are not indiscernible in the writings of this illustrious man, who was much more distinguished for learning than for discriminating common sense. One of his dogmas, "Ubi ecclesia, ibi Spiritus," is pregnant with mischief. He affirms the resurrection of the body, because that cannot be corruptible which is nourished by the blood of Christ. He declares, in opposition to Tatian, that Adam was certainly saved, and not lost; and made way for the opinion broached by some of the later fathers, that this progenitor of the human family, after wandering about the earth, came at last to Calvary, and, dying there, was buried where Christ was afterwards crucified. He declares that Christ descended actually into hell, to preach the faith to the ancient patriarchs. He confirms the opinion of Justin that Satan was not aware of his condemnation till the coming of Christ, and asserts that God sent Enoch to preach to the angels.‡

One of the tenets of Irenæus was, that Christ's millennial reign should precede the last judgment, and that during a thousand years the saints should live in the flesh in spiritual pleasures.

On some of the substantial doctrines of Christianity the statements of Irenæus are extremely clear. He strongly asserts the divinity of Christ, the fall of man, and the atonement. Most of Irenæus' works have, with the exception of a few fragments, utterly perished.

* It is strange to see Milner justifying this sentiment.

† The dogma of apostolical succession, as now interpreted, is not necessarily meant, though the Romanists infer it from this passage, and are always fond of quoting Irenæus.

‡ Dupin, Art. Irenæus.

Irenæus was much engaged in the controversy respecting Easter, which began in his time to constitute a serious difference between the Eastern and Western churches. Victor, who was Bishop of Rome, was grieved at the division, and attempted to settle it by his own authority; and when Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, wrote in opposition to the views of the Roman ecclesiastic, he declared both him and the Asiatic churches to be excommunicated. In this dispute Irenæus interposed as a peacemaker, reminding Victor that different customs and observances were natural, and that, though he, at Lyons, conformed to the practice of the church in Rome, he could discern no reason why the bonds of communion should be broken for so trifling a cause. Perhaps this appeal was, at least for the present, successful.

The Romish Church inserts the name of Irenæus in its list of martyrs. But the authorities of the period make no mention of his violent death, and the report must therefore be regarded as a very vague and uncertain tradition. He appears to have lived till the commencement of the third century.

The spread of the gospel was a remarkable and distinguished feature in the history of the church at this period. Whatever the amount of truth which may be concealed under the exaggerated statements of the monks of the middle ages, it seems at least certain that Wales about this time received the truth, and other evidences show its simultaneous diffusion in Eastern India.

It is, however, very clear that this century witnessed a rapid increase of the hierarchical power. The clergy began for the first time to be distinguished from the laity. The bishops assumed the titles and offices of the Jewish priesthood. The primitive virtues by which many of the pastors of the metropolitan churches were distinguished caused them to be regarded as the advisers of neighboring churches, and paved the way for an assertion of superiority which speedily passed the bounds of apostolical prescription. Yet, even in the year 180, Theophi-

lus, Bishop of Antioch, compares the numerous churches existing in the world to a collection of islands — a phrase indicative of their independence of one another; and the recently discovered work of Hippolytus furnishes, as we shall hereafter see, sufficient evidence that the nominal democracy of the church had not yet entirely passed away, nor been altogether absorbed by an ecclesiastical prelacy.

CARTHAGE.

## CHAPTER X.

### CARTHAGE AND TERTULLIAN.

The attention of the reader must now be directed to a very different part of the Roman empire, and to a name once great in arts and arms, long since, however, dissociated from the few ruins which, heaped in indistinct confusion, disfigure rather than adorn the spot. We speak of Carthage, once the haughty rival of Rome itself, and supposed by some to be the Tarshish of which the Old Testament so frequently speaks. Scarcely can the traveller now discern even a poor remnant of so much greatness. A few stones of Roman Carthage remain, not very far from Tunis. As for the Tyrian city, the sea and sand have swept away or choked up its last remnants, with the solitary exception of the aqueducts by which water was once supplied.

The early history of this celebrated city is very indistinctly known. Its active and commercial character have caused a resemblance to be instituted between it and Venice, when the institutions of that city were more popular than they afterwards became. Its people were busy and thriving, and not addicted in early times, as were the Romans, to cruel and bloody pastimes. The religion of the Carthaginians was originally derived from Phœnicia, like the first settlers themselves, and consisted probably in the worship of Moloch and Astarte. The three Punic wars, which constituted during many years a fierce contest between Rome and its rival city, are known to every historical reader. They commenced 265 B. C., and ended in the year 146 B. C. in the destruction of Carthage. At the latter time the city was levelled to the ground. After this desolation the Gracchi attempted to form a colony upon the spot, but with little success; it was not accomplished until the time of Julius Cæsar. Carthage was soon after the most important city of Roman Africa.

Tertullian was born in the city of Carthage about A. D. 160.* His father was a heathen, a centurion, and Tertullian speaks of himself as one of those who were in darkness before receiving the light of the Lord. The moral corruption which at that time infected the city of Carthage appears to have exerted not a little influence over this celebrated man. Tertullian was conspicuously well educated; and it is inferred that he had originally in view a rhetorical profession, and probably practised as a jurist. His subsequent declarations assure us that many of the observances of heathenism filled him with disgust, especially the gladiatorial shows by which under the Roman sway the people were so much delighted. As he was by nature stern and severe, he became prone to observe with keen scrutiny the errors of the surrounding system, and, even when converted to the Christian religion, never ceased to be an acute denouncer of its errors,

* Smith's Greek and Latin Biography.

whether real or imaginary. Impatience, he tells us, was his distinguishing fault — a defect which contributed greatly to his own misery. "I confess before God my Lord," says he in his Treatise on Patience, "that I venture, rashly enough, if not shamelessly, to write concerning patience; for the practice of which I am altogether unfit, as a man in whom there is no good thing; whereas it is fitting that they who attempt to set forth and commend anything should first be found in the practice of that thing, and should direct the energy of their admonitions by the authority of their own conduct, so that their word need not blush for their deficient deeds." Elsewhere he speaks of himself as "always disordered by the fever of impatience."

The relation which Tertullian sustained to the church (probably of Carthage) was that of presbyter. But he visited Rome, and Jerome assigns to him an ecclesiastical office in that city. Tertullian was married, and a letter exists written by him to his wife. This letter, however, throws little light on his history, beyond the fact that his wife was younger than himself. He warns his wife against a second marriage in case of his death, especially cautioning her, in that event, to unite herself with a Christian, and not a heathen. Great efforts have been made by the Romish Church to disprove his ecclesiastical functions, but to this attempt the authority of Jerome stands in direct contradiction.

Eusebius mentions, with special approbation, the Apology of Tertullian in favor of Christianity. It does not appear at what precise time it was composed; but it bears reference to the persecutions which took place during the reign of Severus, whom Tertullian names as then the reigning emperor. Christianity was at this time treated with extreme rigor, and was suspected of favoring political combinations against the reigning powers. Nor had the believers of that day outlived the charge, so repeatedly brought against them at an earlier period, of being atheists, because they did not serve the Roman or heathen gods. They were subjected, like the Jews of later times, to severe extortions; they were outraged by the mobs, and, under unjust

accusations, were brought before the tribunals of the civil government. In this manner Tertullian complains of such injuries:

"You hold the Christian to be guilty of all manner of wickedness; to be the enemy of gods, of emperors, of laws, of morals, — in short, of universal nature, — and you compel him to deny the charge before you can acquit him, nor can you acquit him except he denies it." Yet he states that even whilst these severe accusations were preferred against those who bore the Christian name, the persecutors made unwilling admissions in their favor. "'Caius Seius,' says one, 'is a good man, only he is a Christian!' And another, 'I wonder that so good a man as Lucius has suddenly become a Christian!' No one considers whether Caius and Lucius are good because they are Christians, or whether they are Christians because they are wise and good. They praise what they know; they blame what they do not know; and they corrupt what they know by that which they do not know; whereas it would be more just to judge of the unknown by the known, than to condemn the known by the unknown. Others designate those whom they knew before they bore this name as vagrants, vile and wicked persons, by the very thing which commends them; they stumble upon their commendation through the very blindness of their hatred. What a woman! how loose! how gay! What a youth! how profligate! (as if these were commendations.) But they have become Christians! So the improvement is imputed to Christianity. . . . The no longer jealous husband turns out his now modest wife; the once suffering father renounces his now obedient son; the master, who was heretofore compelled to be lenient, sends from his eyes the now faithful slave. It is an offence even to be reformed under the name of Christianity. Virtue has no merit compared with the hatred of Christians!" *

The outrages committed on Christians at this period closely

* Tertull. Apologet. sect. II., iii.

resembled the scenes with which all eyes have been too familiar. "Daily we are besieged, daily betrayed; especially are we oppressed in our very assemblies and congregations." Soldiers plundered their property; their slaves betrayed them; angry mobs denounced them before the tribunals. Sincerity was not demanded; on the contrary, they were repeatedly told that if they complied with the external requisitions of the laws, they might continue, if they pleased, secretly to adhere to their religion.

The remonstrance of Tertullian is one of the most noble and masterly remains of Christian antiquity. The production is distinguished by the eloquence peculiar to a juris-consult, and bears throughout the traces of having been designed, not for a private perusal, but for a public effect. It is, moreover, distinguished by that style of African eloquence which Apuleius so highly eulogizes, and which comprehended antithetical, artificial, and balanced expressions, with a large infusion of irony. It is not so much a collection of direct evidences of Christianity, as an oration to stir up men's minds to inquire into its claims. It is throughout full of force and fire; it bears the most unequivocal testimony to the morality and high character of the Christians of the period, demonstrates in pungent and biting phrase the inconsistency of those who loaded them with infamy.

Among the productions of Tertullian are two works, evidently reciprocal to each other, some of the sentiments of which have given to the author considerable celebrity in ecclesiastical polemics. They are his treatises on Baptism and on Repentance, if the title of the latter may not more appropriately be — on Penance. Two extracts from this masterly performance will not be regarded as inappropriate. The first is his remonstrance on behalf of liberty of conscience:

"One may worship God, another Jove, another may stretch forth his supplicating hands to Heaven; another to the altar of Faith, another (if you so choose to interpret it) may in his prayer count up the clouds; another may count the compartments of

the ceiling; one may vow his own life to his God; another the life of his heifer. For see whether it does not conspire to the praise of irreligion to take away the liberty of religion and to forbid my choice of a divinity, so that it shall not be permitted to me to worship whom I will, but I must needs worship whom I will not. For no one wishes to be reverenced by an unwilling person, and power over their vain superstitions was accorded even to the Egyptians themselves."*

In the following we must make some allowance for the exaggerations of the rhetorician; yet the facts, after being thus sifted, are sufficiently remarkable:

"We are beings of yesterday, and we have filled all your places, your cities, your islands, your castles, your boroughs, your council-rooms, your very camps, your wards, your offices, your palace, your senate, your forum; we leave to you your temples alone. What war is there in which we should not be serviceable and well-prepared, even though unequal in numbers; we, who submit to death so readily, if it were not that, according to our discipline, it is more lawful to be killed than to kill? For we have it in our power without arms and without rebellion, simply by separation, to fight against you with the weapon of a simple divorce. For, if so great a multitude of men as we are were to withdraw ourselves into some distant corner of the world, the loss of so many and such good citizens would everywhere cripple your administration, and you would be punished by their absence. Doubtless you would tremble at your own solitude — you would shrink from the silence and the stupor as if of a dead world — you would ask, Of whom are we the governors?"

The treatise on Baptism was occasioned by the following circumstance:

A female, named Quintilla, had propounded among the members of the church at Carthage the sentiment that the rite of

* Tertulliani Liber Apologet., cap. xxiv.

baptism was neither beneficial nor requisite. She was a Gnostic, described by Tertullian as a Cäinite; perhaps a term of reproach, derived from the antinomian heresies for which that sect was remarkable. Tertullian, in terms of his usual severity, terms her "a viper, seducing many by her most poisonous doctrine, and principally hostile to baptism; following therein the custom of asps and serpents of that kind, who seek for dry and unwatered places. But we," he proceeds, "according to that ἰχθυς (fish), Jesus Christ, are born in water, nor are we saved except by remaining in it. Thus that most monstrous Quintilla, incapable of teaching any doctrine correctly, especially desires to kill the little fishes by taking them out of water." *

This passage may need a little explanation. The attempt to give it will tend to illustrate some of the modes of thinking adopted by the church in the third century. The fish was regarded as a peculiar emblem of Christ, and is not unfrequently found sculptured on the tombs of the early Christians. It was recommended by Clement of Alexandria as one of the emblems suitable to the believer, and it had a double signification, referring first to the water of baptism (and implying an approximation to the *opus operatum* with which the present age has been so much nauseated), and also anagrammatically expressing the four Greek words "Jesus Christ, Son of God, our Saviour," — Ἰησους Χριστός Θεου Υἱός Σωτήρ. The decadence of primitive doctrine is painfully apparent in the latter part of the preceding extract. "O happy sacrament of water," says the same writer in his introductory sentence, "by which we are washed from the sins of our original blindness, and made free unto eternal life!"

According to Tertullian's view, baptism was not the actual communication of the gift of the Spirit, but the removal of sin as preparatory to those gracious influences. He describes the rite of baptism as attended with anointing and imposition of

* De Baptismo, § i.

hands. "Then that most Holy Spirit freely descends from the Father upon the cleansed and blessed body. He rests upon the waters of baptism, recognizing it as his primitive resting-place. . . . And, as after the waters of the deluge by which the old iniquity was purged away, after the baptism (so to speak) of the world, the dove sent out of the ark announced peace to the earth from the wrath of God, and returned with the olive-branch, recognized by all nations as a sign of peace, so, by the same arrangement of a spiritual influence, the dove of the sacred Spirit flies over the earth, — that is, our flesh, — emerging from the laver after former sins, thus bringing the peace of God, the ark being the symbol of the church. But the world sins again, in which respect baptism is ill set forth by the deluge; therefore it is destined to fire, as the man who, after baptism, renews his sins." This doctrine is also implied in the following passage: after dwelling on the deliverance of Israel from Egypt by *water*, of the purification of *water* at Marah, of the supply of *water* granted to the thirst of the Israelites, Tertullian proceeds:

"Christ never appears without *water*. For he himself is baptized with *water;* being invited to a marriage, he shows the first rudiments of his power on *water;* when he preaches, he invites the thirsting to his eternal *water;* when he treats of love, he approves the cup of *water* offered to the poor as an act of charity; he derives refreshment from the well of *water;* he walks on the *water;* he readily passes across the *water;* he administers *water* to his disciples; he preserves the testimony of the *water* of baptism till his passion; when he is delivered to the cross, *water* appears, — the hands of Pilate witness it; when he is wounded, *water* issues from his side, — the spear of the soldier witnesses it." *

In the following passage the reader may trace the early recognition of three orders of officers; though in contending that

* De Baptismo, § ix.

the priesthood alone should administer baptism he rather entreats than claims:

"The chief priest, who is the bishop, has the power of administration; after him the presbyters and deacons, — not, indeed, without the authority of the bishop, as is meet for the good of the church. . . . The word of God must not be concealed from any; wherefore baptism, equally valued of God, may be exercised by all; but how much more does the discipline of humility and modesty become the laity, so that even when they *may* compete in these things with their superiors, let them not assume to themselves the prescribed office of the bishop. . . . The promptitude of the helper is excused when the exigency of the person in danger is urgent, *for he would be the cause of the man's ruin* (perditi hominis) *if he forbore to grant him what he rightfully could.*"

Tertullian proceeds to argue that baptism is not to be rashly administered. "Give to every one that asketh of thee" has its own application, and belongs to almsgiving. In this case, however, that saying should be rather considered, "Give not that which is holy to dogs, and cast not your pearls before swine." "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be a partaker of other men's sins." He quotes the case of Philip baptizing the eunuch as a special case, pointed out by the express intervention of God, whilst the fact of his having gone to Jerusalem to worship shows that he was prepared for the rite. He observes that if it shall be said Paul was suddenly baptized, his host Simon knew him to be "a vessel of election." "The indication of God passes by his own prerogatives; every desire of man can both deceive and be deceived. Therefore, according to the condition and disposition of each person, and to their age, the delay of baptism is advantageous; principally, however, regarding children. For why is it necessary that their sponsors be thrown into danger? Because that they themselves may fail in their promises through death, and be deceived by the increase of an unholy disposition. The Lord, indeed, says, 'Suffer them to

come to me.' Let them come when they have grown up; come whilst they can learn; come when they can go in the direction in which they are taught. Let them become Christians when they are able to know Christ. Why does an innocent age hasten to the remission of sins? More care is used in secular matters; but divine things are intrusted where earthly substance would not be. Teach them to ask for salvation, that thou mayest give to him that asketh. . . . They who know the responsibility of baptism will rather dread its consummation than its delay. A complete faith is sure of salvation."

These quotations are introduced, not with a view of determining the much-litigated question of baptism, but with that of showing how far and how grievously the church of Christ had departed from its original purity. It is evident that baptism was no longer the mere memorial of a regenerative change, affecting from its very simplicity. It had become a sacrament, possessed of sanctifying and life-giving virtue. It was fast falling into the hands of the High Priest, was accompanied by unctions and sponsorships, and was invested with so solemn a significance that sins committed after it partook of a deadly character, for which reason Tertullian vindicated its delay; whilst salvation without baptism was regarded as a much more hopeful thing, than falling away after its solemn forms had been administered. To whatever extent Tertullian might sympathize with these views, the fact of their existence is unquestionable.

The "Treatise de Pœnitentiâ" is an appropriate companion to that on baptism. As the former treatise might be calculated to take away all hope from those who had committed sins after baptism, and might so cause penitents to renounce it altogether, Tertullian endeavors by this tract to guard against the opposite error, and earnestly warns those who had committed sins after baptism to repent publicly of their backsliding, and not to be deterred by shame and a fear of consequences from a public confession of their error. Speaking of this second repentance, he says:

"This act is most forcibly expressed by a Greek word 'exomologesis,' by which we confess our fault to the Lord, not indeed as if he were ignorant of it, but in so far as satisfaction is administered by confession, penitence is created by confession, God is mitigated by penitence. Therefore exomologesis is the discipline of a man prostrating and humbling himself, imposing on himself a behavior which may attract mercy to him: it enjoins his dress and food; that he shall lie on sackcloth and ashes; that he shall smear his body with filth; that he shall depress his mind by grief; that he shall change the things by which he has sinned by sorrowful treatment; that he shall nourish his prayers by fastings, groans, weep and roar day and night to the Lord his God, cast himself before the presbyters, kneel before the favorites of God, and desire all his brethren to be ambassadors to God for him."

The church was evidently rapidly sinking into the practice which the Romanists now designate by the name of penance. It must not, however, be inferred that all the views of Tertullian were of the stamp above quoted.

In his book on prayer (De Oratione) Tertullian acknowledges the Lord's Prayer to be a form prescribed for the use of the disciples of Christ, and he calls that prayer an epitome of the whole gospel. We learn from this treatise that it was at that time the ordinary practice of Christians to wash their hands and throw off their outer garment during prayer. "Is it true," says Tertullian, remonstrating against this practice, "that God cannot hear the cloaked worshipper, when he heard the three holy men praying in the furnace of the King of Babylon, with their cloaks and their tiaras?" It appears that some sat during prayer, after the manner of the heathen devotees or of the modern Mahometans. "Shall we tell God that our religion fatigues us?" says the remonstrant. He equally exclaims against the ostentatious elevation of hands and the loud voices in which the Christians uttered their prayers, and asks if God's ears wait for sounds how it happened that the prayer of Jonah

from the belly of the whale made its way through the entrails of the fish and through the superincumbent waters till it reached heaven. Another custom is mentioned. Heretofore it had been usual for the Christian worshippers to close their social meetings with the kiss of peace; but now, on their fast days, this custom was omitted, as being a symbol of joy not in accordance with the acts of penance. Tertullian regards the omission as of grave consequence. "What prayer can be complete in the absence of the holy sign?" (usually confined to persons of the same sex) "and when did peace ever prevent any one from discharging his duty towards God?" Another custom is worthy of remark. It sometimes happened that those who were undergoing penance refused to celebrate the Lord's Supper on the days appointed for its observance. Tertullian advises them to take with other communicants "the Lord's body, and to reserve it by them till the fast was ended." The reader will here observe the recognition of one "kind" as sufficient, whilst a sanctifying virtue is supposed to reside in the bread.

The two treatises of Tertullian addressed to his wife mark the church's approach to false views of virginity and celibacy. Yet some parts, especially those which describe the injury done by ill-assorted marriages, and the pleasurableness of those founded upon Christian principles, are admirable. The following passage strongly illustrates many of the religious observances of the time. Tertullian is speaking of a mixed marriage:

"Certainly thou canst not make satisfaction to the Lord in the way of religion when thou hast by thy side a slave of the Devil — a procurator of *his* Lord to hinder the studies and offices of devotion; so that if a special day is to be observed, the husband appoints it for the baths; if fasts are to be kept the husband on that day will appoint a feast, or if the wife wishes to go abroad the duties of her household will be unusually burdensome. For who would permit his wife, for the sake of visiting Christians, to go the circuit of the streets and to enter the

strangest and poorest cottages? Who would willingly allow her to be taken from his side to attend nightly meetings, if such might happen to be held? Who, in a word, would quietly endure her to pass the night in the solemnities of Easter? or would unsuspiciously send her to that feast of the Lord which is so much calumniated? Who would permit her to creep into a prison to kiss the chains of the martyr? . . . to offer water for the feet of the saints? . . . If a wandering brother come, what hospitality could he expect in a strange house? If presents are to be made, the barn and the stores are closed . . . Wilt thou be concealed when thou markest thy bed or thy person with the sign (of the cross), or when thou blowest away that which is unclean (evidently referring to wicked spirits), when thou risest in the night to pray? Wilt thou not seem to be performing some kind of magic?"

In his treatise "Ad Martyres" (to the Martyrs), Tertullian alludes to the mode in which these suffering brethren were sustained, namely, "by refreshments of the body, which the Mother-church had sent from its abundance, and which were ministered by individual brethren out of their own wealth." With great fidelity he warns them "not to grieve the Holy Spirit who entered with you into the prison. For had he not entered with you, you would not have been there now." Among other things, Tertullian mentions a kind of indulgence which appears to have been there practised. When an offender against the church desired to be reconciled to the community, it was usual for him to provide himself with a petition from one of the imprisoned Christians, which bore the name of *libellus pacis*, and which constituted a kind of saintly intercession, by virtue of which he was allowed the enjoyment of church ordinances. "For they who are not at peace with the church are accustomed to crave it from the imprisoned martyrs." He endeavors to encourage them to endurance by the examples of those who had borne much for their incorruptible crown; by the examples of Lucretia, Mutius, Heraclitus, Empedocles,

Peregrinus, Dido, Regulus, Cleopatra, and others, who submitted to suffering from motives far from sublime.

The treatise "Adversum Judæos" (against the Jews) describes the progress which Christianity had made in the time of the writer.

"For whom does the Father hold at the place of His right hand but Christ the Son, whom all nations shall hear — that is, shall believe . . . for now we behold the varieties of the Getuli, and the many frontiers of the Moors; all the outposts of Spain, and the different nations of Gaul; parts of Britain inaccessible to Roman arms, subdued to Christ; and some from Sarmatia and Dacia and Germany and Scythia, besides other nations, as well as many provinces and islands unknown to us, and which we cannot enumerate. In all which places the name of Christ, who has already come, shall be triumphant; for the gates of all cities fly open before him, and before him none are shut. . . . The reign and name of Christ go everywhere; he is everywhere believed; he is worshipped by all the nations above mentioned; everywhere he reigns, everywhere he is adored; to all he is equally given; the king does not receive from him superior gifts — the barbarian does not enjoy inferior joy; his merits have no relation to dignity or to birth; to all he is equal, to all he is king, to all he is judge, to all he is both Lord and God."*

This passage demands a few observations. Making every allowance, as we must do, for the imperfect information of the times, and the impulses of an African writer, especially when we remember the peculiar characteristics of Tertullian as an individual, it is evident that some basis of fact must lie beneath all this eloquent superstructure, although in the present day it may be difficult to ascertain what that fact may be. It is perhaps true that among the many remnants of ancient Rome which have been found existing (in Britain, for instance), nothing has as yet appeared tending to elucidate the early his-

* Adver. Judæos, § VII.

tory of Christianity in these islands; and it is also true that, on his advent to these shores, the monk Austin found no remnant of an earlier Christianity. We must, however, be allowed to think that such facts do not invalidate the testimony of Tertullian, but only leave it unexplained; and that so public a man would scarcely have dared (better principles not forbidding) to expose himself in so public a manner to the contradiction of the Jews, had he been conscious that he was merely making a rhetorical flourish. We must, therefore, take it for granted that Britain had by this time received the gospel of Christ, and must refer the reader to a pamphlet of Mr. Hallam, entitled "Observations on the Story of Lucius," for further information on this subject.

The "Præscriptiones adversus Hereticos" (the rules against heretics) conveys a forcible description of the practices among the Marcionites. We subjoin a passage, with Neander's notes: "I will not omit a description of heretical conduct, how worthless, how earthly, how human it is; without dignity, without authority, without discipline, corresponding to their faith. First of all, it is uncertain who is a catechumen, who is a believer among them; they all alike approach, — they pray alike" (that is, they all take part in the same prayers; there are no special prayers for the catechumens and for the baptized; at the prayers preparatory to the Supper the catechumens were not dismissed); "also, if the heathen come in, they will cast that which is holy to the dogs, and pearls before swine." (This, no doubt, refers to the celebration of the holy Supper, at which heretics and heathens were allowed to be present. Tertullian does not allow the reality of the holy Supper among heretics, nor that the body of the Lord is with them.) "The neglect of discipline they regard as simplicity, and the attention we pay to it they call cajolery; they make peace with all indiscriminately" (that is, they hold church communion with all, without distinction); "it signifies nothing to them what differences of doctrine are found among them, provided they unite in impugn-

ing the one truth. All promise knowledge. The catechumens are perfect before they are taught; even the female heretics, — how forward! — who venture to teach, to dispute, to practise exorcisms, to promise cures, perhaps even to baptize! Their ordinations are rash, careless, inconstant. At one time they appoint neophytes; at another time, men bound to the world" (that is, who are connected with certain state offices; for already a law of the church existed that no one bound — *muneribus publicis* — should venture to enter the clerical calling, since it was presumed that the undertaking of such worldly business was quite inconsistent with that vocation); "sometimes our apostles, that they may bind them to themselves by the glory (of station), since they cannot by truth. Nowhere is promotion easier than in the camp of rebels, since simply to be there is a merit. Therefore one man is bishop to-day, another to-morrow; to-day he is a deacon who to-morrow will be a reader; to-day he is a presbyter who to-morrow will be a layman; for even on laymen they confer priestly offices."

We have quoted from Tertullian a passage relative to liberty of conscience, which we hold to be extraordinary for the age which produced it. We must now extract from this treatise a passage of a contrary tendency, referring to those heretics who would appeal to Scripture as the basis of truth; this prerogative being, in his opinion, only for those who observe the tenets "which the church has received from the apostles, the apostles from Christ, and Christ from the Father." He says that if they be heretics they cannot be Christians; "and, not being Christians, can have no right to Christian literature. To them it may be appropriately said: Who art thou? when and how didst thou come here? Why dost thou, who dost not belong to me, use my things? By what right, Marcion, dost thou cut down my wood? By what license, Valentinus, dost thou turn the course of my fountains? By what power, Apelles, dost thou remove my landmarks? The possession is mine; why dost thou sow and reap according to thy pleasure? The posses-

sion is mine. I am the ancient possessor, the first possessor; I have the original from the very authority to whom the facts themselves happened; I am the heir of the apostles; as they have delivered in their will, as they have delivered it to be believed, as they have sworn to it, so I hold it: but thou hast been already disinherited and abjured by them, as heretics, as enemies. For why is it that heretics are enemies and strangers to the apostles, unless because of the difference of doctrine which each has brought out or received by his own fancy, in opposition to the apostles."* We can understand how such an argument as this might occur to a man like Tertullian, and might apply to cases in which the Scriptures were perverted, often to the basest of purposes; but such a setting up of the authority of the church, to the denial of all fair inquiry into Scripture, is most dangerous, and shows — if proof were necessary, seeing that Tertullian was but speaking the opinions of his time — to what lengths men may go who base their Christianity upon the authority of the ancient Fathers of the church. The true principles of argumentation were as yet most imperfectly understood. A little later, Arnobius says that he cannot enter into controversy with atheists; while Lactantius pursues a similar course with the Epicurean who questioned his principles.†

Tertullian's treatise "De Animâ" (respecting the soul) is quoted by the Roman Catholics in support of their system; nor is it quoted unjustly. Whether Tertullian was qualified for such a work as this may be questioned; or, rather, it is beyond question. His impulse was evidently towards the concrete rather than the abstract; he could expatiate, but not analyze; nor, considering the qualities of his mind, can we be surprised at the many errors into which he falls; as when he asserts the corporeity of the soul, though of a superior kind, refers to its propagation at the same time with the body, and its accompani-

* De Præscriptione Hæreticorum, § xxxviii.

† See Woodham's L. S. V. Tertulliani, Lib. Apol. Cambridge, 1843.

ment from birth by an evil spirit; and when he declares that, after the death of the body, the soul descends into a state of which the subsequent doctrine of purgatory was not a very dissimilar exponent.

There exists among Tertullian's writings a treatise "De Pallio" (concerning the philosopher's cloak). That garment, and the manner in which it was regarded by some Christians, has been already referred to in the mention of Justin Martyr. It appears that, from some cause or other (various conjectures exist as to what that cause was), Tertullian had adopted the pallium — the distinguishing badge of the Greek philosophers — as his ordinary attire, in preference to the toga, which was the usual garb of the man of business. It was, doubtless, a modification of the ascetic spirit which has prevailed in the world, and has sucked up, to so large an extent, the energy of the Christian system; falsely representing that Christianity and business are antipodal, and that a man can best serve God by retreating from the business and cares of the world, instead of sanctifying them in them.

About the beginning of the third century, Tertullian separated himself from the body of Christians with whom he had hitherto associated, and became a Montanist. The description given of the rise of this heresy by Apollinaris of Hierapolis, quoted in Eusebius, may interest the reader, as marking the simplicity of early times:

"Lately, however, having been at Ancyra, a city of Galatia, and having understood that the church in Pontus was very much agitated by this new prophecy, as they call it, but which — as shall be shown, with divine assistance — deserves rather the name of false prophecy, I discoursed many days in the church, both respecting these matters and others that were proposed; so that the church indeed rejoiced, and was strengthened in the truth, but the adversaries were put to flight, and the opponents were cast down. But, as the presbyters of the place requested that we should leave some account of those

things that we said, in opposition to the enemies of the truth, Zoticus Otrenus also being present, who was our fellow-presbyter, — this, indeed, I did not perform, but I promised writing thither, and to send it as soon as possible, if the Lord permitted." This and other matters he states in the beginning of his work, premising the cause of the mentioned heresy as follows: "Their combination, therefore, and recent heretical severance from the church, had for its origin the following cause. There is said to be a certain village of Mysia in Phrygia called Ardaba. There, they say, during the proconsulship of Cratus in Asia, one of those who was but a recent convert, Montanus by name, in the excessive desire of his soul to take the lead, gave the adversary occasion against himself, so that he was carried away in spirit, and wrought up into a certain kind of frenzy and irregular ecstasy, raving and speaking and uttering strange things, and proclaiming what was contrary to the institutions that had prevailed in the church, as handed down and preserved in succession from the earliest times. But of those that happened then to be present, and to hear these spurious oracles, some, being indignant, rebuked him as one under the influence of demons and the spirit of delusion, and only exciting disturbances among the multitude. These bore in mind the distinction and the warning given by our Lord, when he cautioned them to be vigilantly on their guard against false prophets. Others again, elated as if by the Holy Spirit and the prophetic gift, and not a little puffed up, and forgetting the caution given by our Lord, challenged this insidious, flattering and seducing spirit, and were themselves captivated and seduced by his influence, so that they were no longer able to silence him. Thus, by an artifice, or rather by a certain crafty process, the devil having devised destruction against those who disobeyed the truth, and thus excessively honored by them, secretly stimulated and fired their understandings, already wrapt in insensibility, and wandering away from the truth. He also excited two others, females, and filled them with the spirit of delusion,

so that they spake like the former, in a kind of frenzy, out of all propriety, and in a manner strange and novel. . . The few that were deceived were Phrygians; and the same arrogant spirit (Montanus) taught them to revile the whole church under heaven, because it gave neither access nor honor to this false spirit of prophecy. The faithful, therefore, held frequent conferences in many places throughout Asia on this account, and, having examined these novel doctrines, pronounced them vain, rejected them as heresy, and prohibited from communion with the church those who held them. . . Let them tell us in the name of God, O friends! which of those who began prating, from Montanus and his women, is there that suffered persecution or was slain by the impious? None. Not even one of them has been seized and crucified for the name (of Christ). None at all. Not one of their women was ever scourged in the synagogues of the Jews, or stoned. No, — never." *

To this description from Apollinaris may be added a few additional explanations respecting the heresy of Montanus. It was the assertion of this man that the doctrine taught by our Lord had not yet received its full and final perfection, and that it was reserved for himself, who possessed (as he said) a divine inspiration, or (according to some opinions) professed himself actually the Paraclete, to give to Christ's system its complete development. Montanus and his followers thus described their "divine ecstasy." † "Lo!" said he, "the man is a lyre, and I play upon him like a plectrum. The man sleeps, and I am awake. Lo! it is the Lord who entrances the hearts of men, and gives hearts to men." Tertullian, however, declares that the revelations of Montanus referred rather to points of discipline than of fundamental doctrine. The leading peculiarity of the Montanists consisted in their severe and ascetic austerities.

* Euseb., Eccl. Hist., lib. v. § xvi.

† The Chevalier Bunsen identifies this with animal magnetism, grounding his opinion on the words of Montanus himself, recorded above. The passage which he quotes is from Epiph. Hæres., § iv. p. 105.

Second marriages were condemned. Flight from persecution was held unlawful. Sins after baptism were regarded as unpardonable. The doctrine of the personal reign of Christ was strongly asserted. Many smaller sects subsequently sprang from the first heresy, — the Priscillianists, the Quintillani, the Pepuziani, called from Pepuza, where Montanus himself lived; the Artoturitæ, called from the use of bread and cheese in their rites; the Tascodrugitæ, called from putting their fingers on their noses during prayer. Various charges of enormities made against this body so strongly resemble those which were brought against the primitive Christians by their heathen enemies, that they may be summarily dismissed, with contempt. What were the causes which led Tertullian to adopt the sect of the Montanists? has been often asked. Some speak of the change as being the effect of his jealousy at seeing Victor constituted Bishop of Rome before himself. But that view rather indicates what a Roman Catholic historian might regard as a probable cause of the schism, than any course rendered probable by the actual antecedents of Tertullian's history. For it does not appear that he ever held a high ecclesiastical eminence; and the bishopric of Rome was now rapidly becoming a post of influence. It is also quite impossible to read any of the writings of Tertullian and not to perceive that the embryo elements of Montanism were already there, and that a religion of which another John the Baptist would have been the only recognized apostle — and, moreover, a religion which might allow full scope for a dissentient, sneering, captious, discontented spirit — was the only frame-work suited to his nature. Such men, however, do service to the age in which they live. Unloving and unloved though they be, they detect abuses, and terrify men from their perpetration. They perform a similar part to the dogs which infest the city of Constantinople, — they alarm the timorous, and disturb the repose of the tranquil, but they prevent the whole neighborhood from becoming a nuisance, and a fearful source of pestilence and death.

The writings of Tertullian, which employed him after this change in his history, afford the best exemplification of the nature of the new opinions he had been led to adopt.

Septimus Severus, when head of the Roman empire, had passed a new law, which, extending beyond the construction which had hitherto persecuted the Christian religion, because its profession was inconsistent with the duties of Roman citizens, enacted several penalties against those who should become Jews or Christians. Under the operation of this law, the following circumstance occurred. Some occasion, now unknown, led to the distribution of a donative among the soldiers, who, in receiving the present, wore crowns of laurel on their heads. As garlands were extensively used in heathen festivals, it was deemed unlawful for a Christian to appear so adorned; and when a believing soldier made his appearance among his companions, bearing his crown, not on his head but in his hand, he was imprisoned. Many of the Christians of the time censured the soldier for having been unnecessarily pertinacious respecting things indifferent, and for having thus provoked gratuitously a hostility which might disturb the peace they had enjoyed during some time. In this crisis, Tertullian, whose pen was always ready, came forward to vindicate the soldier, and to protest against the half-heartedness which had censured him. He maintained that it is unlawful for a Christian to become a soldier, because no man might serve another lord than Christ, and argued that if any one shall say that it was lawful to receive a crown because scripture had not forbidden it, it might with equal justice be said that it was unlawful to receive a crown because scripture had not commanded it. He then declares that the church had already practised many things for which they could show no apostolical precedent, and that, instead of saying that that is permitted which is not prohibited, the maxim, pushed to its conclusion, would be, that all is prohibited which is not permitted.

In the course of this treatise we observe indications of the

practice of the church at the period, which are deserving of special notice, and which show how much rust had already been permitted to accumulate about its usages, and to tarnish the brightness of original Christianity.

"To begin with baptism. When we are about to enter into the water, we call to witness in the church, whilst under the hand of the president, that we renounce the Devil, his pomp, and his angels; then we are thrice plunged, and answer to more things than God in the gospel has declared; then, being taken up, we taste a mixture of milk and honey, and from that day for a whole week we abstain from our daily bath. We receive the sacrament of the Eucharist, commanded by the Lord to be celebrated at the time of meals, and by all persons in common, in our early morning assemblies, nor do we take it from any hands but those of our presidents. We offer oblations for the dead, and we make annual festivals celebrating the day of their death like a birthday. On the Lord's day we deem it unlawful to fast or to worship with bended knees. From Easter to Whitsuntide we enjoy the same immunity. We are filled with anxiety if any of the cup or of the bread fall to the ground. We sign the sign of the cross at every journey and every movement; at every entrance and exit; when we put on our shoes; when we wash; at eating, at lighting, at lying down, at sitting; in whatever we engage. Of these and similar observances if you ask for a rule in scripture, you will find none; tradition authorizes it, custom sanctions it, and faith observes it."* To such an extent had this man-made law proceeded at so early a period!

In another tract, "De Virginibus Velandis" (respecting the veiling of unmarried women), whilst he develops still further his Montanist propensities, he declares the rule of faith to be uniform, unmovable, and unalterable; and sets forth a formulary which is an evident anticipation of the subsequent Nicene creed.

* De Coronâ, iii., iv.

To the description incidentally given in the last chapter of the church of the second century, a few additional particulars may be here subjoined.

Without entering upon the discussion, in this volume, of perplexing questions, respecting which the opinions of the learned have been much divided, — such as the first origin of the "Clementine forgeries," or that of the so-called "Apostolical Constitutions,"— it is evident that in the course of this century a great advance was made towards prelatical doctrines; towards which none contributed a more important share than the Montanists, who united in this tendency with their adversaries, the Gnostic Ebionites. "The power of the keys" began to be familiarly spoken of as the gift of Christ to Peter, through whom it was transmitted to the church, with a suspicious ignoring of the fact that it was intrusted, at a subsequent period, by the same Lord, to all the other apostles. As yet, however, the term "Papa" was given to bishops in general. The Judaical influence, against which the primitive believers had been so earnestly warned, infected and paralyzed the spiritual energies of true Christians. The phrases Levites, priests, high-priests, became of common occurrence, and the distinction between the clergy and laity began to be distinctly marked. The bishops were still elected by the church at large.

But the simplicity of public worship had not yet been sacrificed, and the circumstances under which these early Christians met were favorable to its preservation. Buffeted and reprobated as the believers were, they could have neither temples nor imposing ceremonies; they often met at dead of night or in the early morning, and their assemblies were characterized by as little pomp and circumstance as possible. In these meetings the Scriptures were read, certain psalms were sung, sermons were preached, and prayers offered, "according to the ability" of the conductor of the service. At the close of the prayers the people responded by an audible "Amen."* That ancient

* Such, at least, was the practice after the prayer at the Eucharist, and the general custom is fairly inferable. Just. Apol. § ii.

hymn which, transmitted through the Romish Church, now forms part of the form of thanksgiving in the communion service of the Church of England, and which appears to have been formed by successive additions to the angels' song at the Nativity, was perhaps in use at this period.* It was sung antiphonally. It is the most ancient hymn extant:

"Glory to God in the highest;
And peace upon earth; good-will to men!

"We praise Thee; we bless Thee; we worship Thee;
We give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory,
O Lord the King of Heaven, God the Father Almighty,
O Lord God!

"O Lord, only-begotten Son!
O Jesus Christ!
O Lamb of God!
O Son of the Father!
O Thou who takest away the sins of the world!
Have mercy on us!
O Thou who takest away the sins of the world!
Have mercy on us! receive our prayer!
O Thou who sittest at the right hand of the Father!
Have mercy on us!

"For thou alone art holy!
Thou alone art Lord!
Jesus Christ!
To the glory of God the Father! Amen!"

Clemens Alexandrinus mentions another, called "Hail Light," and himself composed many hymns.

The administration of the Lord's Supper, and the agapē (the love feast) which succeeded it, was provided for by the voluntary offerings of the worshippers, and the remainder was sent, together with what was contributed by monthly subscriptions, to the church-officers and the poor.† The generosity of the

* See Bunsen's Hippolytus, ii. 157, iii. 142.
† Tertull. Apol., § 39.

primitive believers was a distinguished feature in their character. This was manifested by nothing more conspicuously than in the care they took of those who suffered imprisonment for the faith. Waddington very appropriately introduces into his "Church History"* Lucian's ridicule of the care which was taken of one Peregrinus, whom he accuses (with truth, it is too probable) as having been exiled from Armenia for "horrible crimes," but who was afterwards thrown into a prison in Palestine as a Christian. "There came Christians," he says, "deputed from many churches in Asia, to relieve, to encourage, and to comfort him (for the care and diligence which the Christians exert on these occasions are incredible; in a word, they spare nothing). They sent, therefore, large sums to Peregrinus, and his confinement was an occasion of amassing great riches; for these poor creatures are firmly persuaded they shall one day enjoy eternal life, therefore they despise death with wonderful courage." As the death of a martyr was supposed to have the power of absolving from all sin, its anniversary was called his "birth-day." To the deacons was peculiarly intrusted the care of visiting and providing for such persons during their imprisonment. The celebration of the martyrs was distinguished by religious services and by prayers at their graves.† It would appear also that sometimes the *agapæ* were celebrated at or near their graves; and a tomb found among the catacombs at Rome presents an engraving of this ceremonial. Three guests are represented at a table, whilst an attendant is present, with a lamb and a cup, ready to serve them at their meal. Two allegorical figures, Peace and Love, are represented as directing attention to the observance.‡ Marriages were sanctioned by the church; the president of the church announcing the union, and praying for the parties.§ Second marriages were frowned upon; ‖ but when

* Waddington's Church Hist., c. ii. † Tertull., Ad Scap., § iiii.
‡ Maitland's Church in the Catacombs, p. 209.
§ Tertull., De Pudicit. § iv.
‖ Hermæ Past., lib. i. Neander, iv., 4. Clem. Alex., Strom., iii. p. 548.

the Montanists represented them as highly adulterous, they were regarded as having stated the case too strongly. In praying, the faces of the worshippers were turned towards the east,* either because they recognized that translation of the passage in Zechariah, "Behold the man whose name is the East" (the Branch),† or because the east, as the place of sunrise, represented their second birth.‡ Fastings were much practised, especially on Wednesdays and Fridays, though it was usually held obligatory only during the interval between Christ's death and resurrection. There were also watch-nights of "the soldiers of Christ," which continued till three P. M.§ Excommunication was performed in the most solemn manner by one of "the presiding elders;" "the guilty person was banished from the communion of prayers, from assemblies, and all holy converse;"‖ and, where the sin was public, a public repentance was demanded, which, as we have seen, was called ἐξομόλογησις.¶ The sign of the cross may be again referred to as a mode of expelling evil spirits, in constant use. The perversions which a vain philosophy had caused in the example of the Gnostics tended to create an extreme dislike to all who made it their profession; so that Tertullian calls philosophers "the patriarchs of heretics,"** and Clemens Alexandrinus says that some "dreaded philosophy as much as children did hobgoblins."†† The religious meetings at this period were on Sunday, which was called "the Lord's" (ἡ κυριακή), or "the Lord's day" (ἡ κυριακὴ ἡμέρα), but the Christians declaimed against keeping the Sabbath after the Jewish manner;‡‡ and fasting was not allowed except on the Sunday before Easter. Easter, Whit-Sunday, but not Christmas,§§ were observed as festivals.

It is, however, to be observed, that many of these practices

* Tertull. Apol., § xvii.
† Justin, Dial. cum Tryphon. p. 334.
‡ Clem. Alex. Strom., lib. vii.
§ Hermæ Past., III. sin. 5.
‖ Tertull., Apol., § 39.
¶ See *ante*, p. 239.
** Tertull., Adv. Hermogenem.
†† Stromata, lib. vi.
‡‡ Adv. Judæos, iv.
§§ Kay's Writ. of Tertullian, p. 388.

differed according to the peculiar position and usages of the different churches.

The following testimony regarding Tertullian may appropriately conclude this chapter:

"The merit of Tertullian as an author is of a very checkered character. He evidently was deeply imbued with all the learning of the age to which he belonged, and was familiar with the most celebrated poets, historians, jurists, orators and philosophers, of Greece and Rome. Nor, indeed, does he manifest any inclination to dissemble these accomplishments. His style is in the highest degree rough, abrupt, and obscure; abounding in far-fetched metaphors and extravagant hyperboles, while the language is oftentimes uncouth, and almost barbarous, so that the most indulgent critic feels inclined to turn in disgust from pages where he is perpetually shocked, startled, and perplexed. On the other hand, the extreme liveliness and fertility of his imagination, the piercing sharpness of his wit, the trenchant edge of his sarcasm, the impetuous force of his arguments, — which bewilder and stun even when they fail to convince, — and the torrent flood of brilliant declamation in which his glowing conceptions are poured forth, at once excite, amuse, and overwhelm the reader.

"His authority as a theologian has been variously estimated by ecclesiastical writers. While some appeal with confidence to his decision in all matters of controversy not immediately connected with his peculiar views, others, branding him with the title of a perverse heretic, reject his testimony upon all points alike, as altogether worthless. It seems absolutely necessary in this matter, if we would arrive at a fair and practical conclusion, to separate opinions from facts. The opinions of Tertullian, even when expressed at a period when his orthodoxy was beyond suspicion, bear such evident marks of an excitable temperament, and of rash impetuosity, combined with harsh and gloomy asceticism, that they ought to have been received with distrust, even if he had never become the advocate of gross errors; but when

we remember the absurdities into which he was at a subsequent period actually betrayed, we must consider his judgment as disabled. At the same time, since we have not the slightest reason to suspect that he was ever guilty of wilful deception or misrepresentation, we may accept without hesitation the facts which he records." — SMITH'S *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities. Art. Tertullian.*

COIN OF SEVERUS.

STATUE OF HIPPOLYTUS.

## CHAPTER XI.

### HIPPOLYTUS AND THE EARLY ROMAN CHURCH.

The year of the Great Exhibition (1851) was remarkable not only for the attractive spectacle which assembled in the metropolis of Great Britain a concourse of spectators from all parts of the world to witness the results of commercial industry, but also for the publication of a treatise of antiquity throwing great light on the position of the Christian church in the early part of the third century.

The history of this manuscript is curious. M. Villemain, one

of the French literati, had sent a Greek to Mount Athos, with a view of discovering manuscripts of early times.

In the year 1842, a codex was brought from Greece by Myna, and was deposited, among many other treasures, in the public library of Paris. It was written on cotton paper, bore the date of the fourteenth century, and was divided into ten books, but was defective in its beginning and its end. It bore the title "On all Heresies;" but the subject proved so little attractive, that it remained for some time unnoticed, till Mr. Emanuel Miller, a well-known scholar, attracted by some quotations from Pindar and another unknown Greek poet, caused it to be transcribed, and presented the transcription to the University of Oxford, by whom it was published in the Exhibition year.

When this treatise came to be examined, it proved to be evidently the continuation of a treatise some fragments of which were well known under the name of "Philosophumena." These fragments had been ascribed to Origen, although in the face of considerable opposition and several important facts. The author, for instance, spoke of himself as a High Priest, which Origen is known not to have been. The ninth book gives evidence that the author must have resided near Rome, and that he was well acquainted with the ecclesiastical proceedings which took place in that city; matters not well agreeing with Origen's history. There is no evidence whatever that Origen composed a book with such a title, whilst the internal evidence of the book itself is at variance with the probability that it had its origin in Alexandria. On the other hand, Photius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, mentions a work written by Hippolytus, on "Thirty-two Heresies." And the testimony is confirmed by Eusebius, Jerome, Epiphanius, and Peter, Bishop of Alexandria. This work so precisely corresponds with the treatise described by the first of these authors, as to leave no doubt whatever that, in ascribing the production to Hippolytus, a true affiliation has been made. The coincidence was pointed out in a little work, published last year, entitled "The Free Church of Ancient

Christendom," by Rev. Basil H. Cooper, B.A., and has since been more distinctly brought out in a work by Chevalier Bunsen, entitled "Hippolytus and his Age." To these interesting volumes we must refer the reader for an account of the connected evidences on which the identification rests. The ascription of the work to Hippolytus remarkably tallies with the coincidences presented by a statue dug up in the neighborhood of Rome in the year 1551, now in the Vatican Library, and which bears an inscription making mention of all Hippolytus' works. We may, therefore, in this volume assume the authenticity of the work to be satisfactorily settled, and may proceed to avail ourselves of the information furnished here and elsewhere concerning the author and his times.

Hippolytus is mentioned by Jerome, who, however, was not able to specify the city of which he was bishop. He was a disciple of Irenæus. A notion has long prevailed, suggested by Lemoyne, the French ecclesiastical writer, and endorsed by Cave, that Portus Urbis Romæ, the place of Hippolytus' bishopric, was Aden, in Arabia, because that city was called Portus Romanorum, and because Hippolytus wrote in the Greek language. Notwithstanding this latter fact, however, an accumulation of evidence proves that Hippolytus must have been a Roman bishop, and that the place of his residence was Portus, opposite to Ostia, a harbor which Trajan formed at the mouth of the Tiber. The supposed martyrdom of Hippolytus in the reign of Alexander Severus ill accords with the lenity and favor shown to the Christians in that reign. "But in the very year of the death of Alexander Severus, A. D. 235, the persecution of Maximin the Thracian began;" and the authentic lists of bishops of the Church of Rome, written under Liberius, state that under the consuls of last year, Severus and Quintianus, Bishop Pontianus, and "Hippolytus the Presbyter,"* were "transported to Sardinia, that unwholesome island."

* Bunsen's Hippolytus, book I.

Further evidence from the annals of the Church of Rome states that Hippolytus was beaten to death with cudgels, and that his body was afterwards buried in the cemetery of Callistus, in the Appian way. The Christian poet Prudentius refers to his chapel as existing in his time, in an extensive cavern, although he describes it as too small on festal days for those who came to visit it.* The account given of Hippolytus' death by the poet differs from that recorded above; and Bunsen concludes that the received legend that Hippolytus was torn to death by wild horses arose from confounding the fate of the Christian bishop with that of the ancient pagan. Prudentius mentions that Hippolytus had fallen into the heresy of Novatus, but this Bunsen shows to be incredible.

Mention has been already made of Marcia, mistress of Commodus, the son of Marcus Aurelius, a woman well known to have favored the Christians, though probably from motives extremely equivocal. Hippolytus speaks of her as "God-loving," an epithet of the propriety of which the reader can judge for himself. He relates the following story:

"Callistus was the household slave of Carpophorus, a believing man of Cæsar's (Commodus') household. To him Carpophorus, believing him to be a Christian, intrusted a considerable sum of money, directing him to invest it in a banking business. He, having taken the bank, carried it on in a place called Piscina Publica, where not a few deposits were in time intrusted to him on behalf of Carpophorus by widows and brethren. But he, having spent all this money, became bankrupt. When these things were thus done, some one told the matter to Carpophorus. He said that he would demand the truth from him (Callistus). Callistus, seeing these things, and being suspicious of danger from his master, ran away, directing his flight towards the sea; and, finding a vessel in Portus ready for the voyage, he intended embarking on board. But he did

* Prudentii, Peristeph.

not succeed in escaping; for some one told the matter to Carpophorus, who, coming to the harbor, attempted in a boat to reach the fugitive. As the ship was in the middle of the harbor, delayed upon its passage, Callistus saw his master in the boat afar off, and, knowing that he was about to seize him, was reckless of his life, and, thinking his affairs desperate, threw himself into the sea. The sailors, however, having leaped down from the vessel, rescued him against his will. On this the people on the shore set up a great shout, and Callistus was delivered to his master, taken back to Rome, and sent to the Pistrinum. After some time, certain brethren went to Carpophorus and asked him to remit his slave's punishment, saying that he had confessed that he had property lying out in the hands of certain persons, which he could recover. Carpophorus, like a wise man, said that he was careless about the money of his own which had been lost, and only concerned about that which had been deposited. And when many came to him with lamentations, stating that the money which had been intrusted to Callistus had been deposited on the faith of Carpophorus himself, he was over-persuaded, and commanded Callistus to be liberated. But Callistus, having nothing to pay back, and being too well watched to be able to escape, played a deadly trick; and, when the Sabbath came, pretending to go to his debtors, he went to the synagogue of the assembled Jews, where he purposely caused a great riot. They being thus disturbed, fell upon him, and, after beating him, carried him to Fuscianus, the Eparch of the city, bringing this accusation against him. 'The Romans spread it abroad that they publicly recognize our hereditary laws, but this man coming into the midst of us has caused a disturbance amongst us, saying that he is a Christian.' Whilst Fuscianus, on his place as judge, was hearing these things respecting the vexations caused by Callistus, a bystander ran to tell Carpophorus what was taking place. He, hastening to the court, cried out to the Eparch, 'My Lord Fuscianus, I beg that you will not believe this man, for he is no Christian, but he seeks relief by

death after having spent my money, as I will show.' The Jews, thinking this a trick invented by Carpophorus to save Callistus, called out vehemently to the Eparch to punish him. Instigated by them, Fuscianus whipped Callistus, and sentenced him to the mines of Sardinia. Now, there were at Sardinia other martyrs to the faith, and, after some time had passed, Marcia, wishing to do a good work, being a God-loving concubine* of Commodus, called to her the blessed Victor, at that time the bishop of the church, inquiring what martyrs there were at Sardinia. Victor gave up their names, but did not mention Callistus, remembering what things he had dared to do. Marcia, having so much influence as to be able to obtain the favor she asked, gave a letter of release to Hyacinthus the eunuch, a presbyter, who sailed with it to Sardinia, and, giving it to the then governor of the country, he released all the martyrs except Callistus. But Callistus, falling on his knees and weeping, besought that he also might obtain his liberty. Whereupon Hyacinthus, being with difficulty persuaded, asked him of the governor, saying that he was a foster-child of Marcia, and showing him that the thing was without danger. The governor, being persuaded, set Callistus at liberty also. On his return, Victor was much vexed, but, being a compassionate man, he kept quiet till he observed the bad character he bore from many persons (for it was not long since these transactions took place), and, as Carpophorus still opposed him, he sent Callistus to reside in Antinum, sending him monthly supplies."†

Thus far Hippolytus.

By some unknown means Callistus had either at Rome or at Antium become acquainted with Zephyrinus, who was now Bishop of Rome. In this post he had succeeded Victor, of whom we have already spoken. An unhappy concurrence of evidence proves too sadly the commencing degeneracy of the

* A strange association of words! for which St. Hippolytus must answer.
† Hippolyt., Hæres., IX. 12.

metropolitan church. The importance of forms became magnified as the purity of the spirit declined. Hence the undue emphasis laid on the time of observing the Passover; a contest in which, as we have seen, Victor greatly distinguished himself. But, what was more serious still, was the preëminence given in several directions to the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ, and the consequent denial of his divine nature; a doctrine which, though it had underlain Christianity from the first, now broke out with special significance. One of the most noted heretics on this subject in the present age was Theodotus, who had declared Christ to be the mere son of the Virgin, though, in consequence of his holy life, he had received the Spirit at his baptism. Victor expelled him from the church. Following in his steps was Theodotus the banker, who became the head of an order of Gnostic Melchisedekites; and, about the same time, appeared Noetus of Smyrna, whose doctrine was first spread at Rome by one of his disciples.

The description given by Hippolytus of Zephyrinus is by no means favorable. He is spoken of as being an ignorant and venal man, very accessible by bribes. Callistus advanced rapidly in his good graces; and, as soon as Carpophorus was no more, was appointed by him to regulate the affairs of his clergy.

At this time Sabellius appeared as a teacher of divinity, and as a modifier of the doctrine of Noetus, which was, "There is one and the same God, the Creator (Demiurge) and Father of all;" and which was based upon the tenet of Heraclitus, that everything is also its own contrary. His doctrine affirmed that the names Father and Son were merely relative to the difference of epochs. Similarly, Sabellius taught the identity of the Father and Son with each other and with the Spirit. Against the doctrine of Sabellius, Hippolytus, who was both Bishop of Portus and a member of the Presbytery of Rome, vehemently protested, notwithstanding the accusation of Callistus, "You

are Ditheists," because it was falsely asserted that Hippolytus' doctrine involved the belief of two gods.

At the death of Zephyrinus, Callistus succeeded him as bishop; but, in order to avoid the odium which would be attached to his name if he continued to adopt the precise words advocated by Sabellius, he altered the formulary of the Noetians, and established a school, in which, as Hippolytus tells us, heretical doctrines were taught. Hence rose a party whom Hippolytus, in bitter mockery, calls Callistians.

Exercising his powers as Bishop of Rome, Callistus made a decided step towards the indifferentism of later times. Many who had been removed from the communion of the church for various offences were reinstated by him in the places they had lost. He declared the sentence, which marks the increasing power of the Bishop of Rome, that he forgave the sins of all; accompanying this declaration by a further dictum: "If a bishop commits a sin, even if it be a mortal sin, he must not therefore be deposed." In truth, the power of the people was now becoming the mere tatter of a worn-out garment; and, as we have seen in the narrative of Tertullian, the distinction between mortal and venial sins was beginning to be considered decided and absolute.

Another step taken by Callistus marks his untruthful character, and displays, at the same time, how much his biographer and censurer was influenced by the views which Tertullian had so greatly promoted. "From this time, bishops, presbyters and deacons" (the orders were *now* clearly three), "though twice married, even thrice married, began to be received as clergy. But, if any one in orders married, he was to remain as having committed no sin" (which in Hippolytus' eyes appears to be a considerable irregularity, as interfering with the traditional prohibition of second clerical marriages), "Callistus saying that this was according to the apostolic direction, 'Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?' To the same effect he quoted the parable of the tares: 'Let the tares grow together

with the wheat;' that is, sinners in the church. In like manner, he said that the ark of Noah was a figure of the church, in which were dogs, and wolves, and ravens, and all things clean and unclean. Thus, he declared, it ought to be in the ecclesiastical body."*

Even this was not all. Callistus' notions respecting practical morality are represented by Hippolytus as being in other respects extremely low. For, by conniving at the dissolute union with inferior persons of rich parties, not legally married, he gave occasion to the widest censures, and is accused of having taught adultery and murder at once. Nor did he, moreover, hesitate to permit those who had sinned after baptism to undergo a repetition of its administration.

In short, Callistus was a specimen of a shepherd under whom spiritual religion lies prostrate and neglected, and who is ready to lend the name of the church to the evil as well as the good; false in doctrine, equally false in practice and discipline, but always prone, with a spurious charity, to cover evils which the morality of the church renounces and execrates.

Hippolytus mentions another heresy, which about this period excited some attention at Rome, and which was brought to that city by Alcibiades of Apamea, — a man of no moral reputation. He introduced a book, which he called sacred, and which was as gross a fabrication as that which modern Mormonism has latterly endeavored to palm on the world as divine. This book he declared to have been inspired by an angel, whose height was twenty-four schœni (ninety-six Roman miles), his footsteps fifteen miles, &c. &c., and who was accompanied by a female of similar dimensions, the male calling himself the Son of God, and the female the Holy Ghost. He was a great teacher of the Ebionite heresy (a new form of the doctrine of the Essenes), inculcated the necessity of being circumcised, and of the maintenance of the Law, and held Christ to be only human. He

* Hippolyt., Hæres. Refutatio, ix. 12.

declared baptism to be the remission of sins, and that it was sufficient to purify the most abandoned. His system also dealt much in magic and astrology. His ceremonies were performed in the name of God, and adjurations were uttered to the heaven, the water, the winds, the seven angels, the oil, the salt, and the earth!

Hippolytus, who was a great doctrinal author (as the inscription on his statue makes evident), appears to have been the first person known to the Church of Rome as "a popular preacher," — to use a term of frequent occurrence in more modern days. Until his time, though expositions of the Scripture were, of course, constant and familiar, orations, properly so called, were unknown. Hippolytus is celebrated by the ancient Fathers as having preached in Origen's presence; and his homilies are frequently quoted by them. He was a laborious man, somewhat tainted by a severe asceticism, not remarkably clear on questions of the Trinity, but an opposer of the errors of his times, and a sharp reprehender of false morals, even when he found them in the persons of the clergy themselves.

The reader may be interested in a specimen of the style of preaching of this orator. It is in a sermon on the day of judgment.

"Then shall they weep miserably; they shall groan vehemently; they shall beat their faces with their hands; they shall tear their knees with their nails; one crying out to another, 'O, this calamity! O, this cruel business! O, this deceitful compact! O, this terrible misfortune! how has the great impostor seduced us! how have we adhered to him! how are we shut up in his nets! how are we drawn in by his whirl!' . . Then the universal earth will mourn; the sea will mourn; the air will mourn; the sun will mourn; all beasts and fowls will mourn; mountains and hills, and the woods of the field, will mourn on behalf of the human family, because that all have departed from the holy God, and have believed that impure impostor and enemy of God, in the place of Christ the Saviour.

The churches also will mourn with a great mourning, because neither their oblation is any longer like perfume, nor their worship grateful to God. But in those days the precious body and blood of Christ will no longer be available; the singing of psalms will cease; the recitation of scripture will be no more heard; but there will be on men darkness, lamentation on lamentation, woe upon woe!"*

The vignette at the head of this chapter is extracted, by the author's kind permission, from the recently published work of the Chevalier Bunsen, to which we have often referred. In introducing it as the frontispiece to his volumes, the Chevalier says: "The statue of Hippolytus, that precious monument of the fourth century, . . has never yet been well drawn and engraved. . . I, therefore, thought it right that the historical restoration of Hippolytus should be accompanied with a faithful, worthy copy of his statue. Mr. Grimer's lithograph, prefixed to the present volume, faithfully reproduces a classical drawing made from the original. The statue is above life-size, and represents the bishop very characteristically in the Greek pallium, with the Roman toga slung over it. If it does not give an individual likeness of Hippolytus, at all events it presents to us the effigy of a Christian bishop of the apostolic age, and may, in every respect, be called unique in the history of ancient Christian religion and art."†

It appears probable that, as supposed by Chevalier Bunsen, "Hippolytus suffered martyrdom under Maximin, in the first year of his reign, 236 of our era; or, at all events, before its close in 238."

The account given above of Callistus accords ill with the place which he occupies in the Roman Calendar, in which he is spoken of as "St. Callixtus, pope and martyr," and is cited as having opposed fasting and tears to Helagabalus, who wished to make an eating-house of a Christian oratory, and to have been

* De Consummatione Mundi et de Antichristo. Orat. Bibliothec. Patr.

† Bunsen's Hippolytus, xxii.

in every way a pattern of true religion and virtue. (His name is perpetuated by the ancient cemetery which he founded, and in which many Christian martyrs were buried. The cemetery of Callistus now goes under the name of the Catacomb of St. Sebastian. It contains an altar of stone, said to have belonged to that bishop, but of extremely doubtful authenticity.) "It reflects great honor on our pope," says Alban Butler, "that this wise emperor (Alexander Severus) used always to admire with what caution and solicitude the choice was made of persons that were promoted to the priesthood among the Christians, whose example he often proposed to his officers and the people to be imitated in the election of civil magistrates."* It is to be feared that much of the sanctity which Roman Catholic tradition has handed down to the world has no better foundation than these praises of St. Callixtus.

One of the saints whom the Church of Rome has distinguished about this period is St. Felix, a native of Nola in Campania, who, in the persecution under Decius, was seized, scourged, chained and imprisoned, in a dungeon so covered over with broken pieces of pottery and glass that the saint could neither "stand nor lie." Whilst in this dungeon, he was said to have been directed by an angelic messenger to visit his bishop, Maximus, and, as in the case of Peter, the chains simultaneously fell off his body. He found Maximus almost dead with hunger and cold, having fled to avoid his persecutors, and, after restoring the bishop to his senses, Felix took him on his shoulders and carried him back to his own house. We need not further pursue the story, which rests principally upon the authority of Prudentius, who probably "told the tale as it had been told to him." It will suffice to say that many miracles are reported to have been performed at the shrine of this holy man.

Among its sainted personages of this period, the Romish Church commemorates, also, St. Austrimonius, who preached

* Butler's Lives of the Saints, Oct. 14th.

with great success in Auvergne; Saint Gatian, the first Bishop of Tours, who proclaimed the gospel in dens and caves; and St. Dionysius, the first Bishop of Paris, confounded by some with Dionysius the Areopagite, but believed by others to have lived about the year 250. The absurd legendary story of his journey from Paris to a village in its environs, after his head had been struck off, is discountenanced by the best Catholic authorities.

It is manifest that at this period the ecclesiastical power was rapidly passing away from the hands of the people. Though some traces of a more democratic constitution still remained at Rome, — though the bishop was chosen by the suffrages of the people, and a presbytery still kept up the forms of power in matters of faith and discipline, — the real authority was rapidly concentrating itself in the presiding bishop, who, with whatever nominal appendages, really wielded the ecclesiastical sceptre.

Though the free action of the church was, however, nearly suspended in the West, it continued to maintain itself with greater vigor in the Eastern churches. A letter written at a somewhat later period, by Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, to Cyprian, makes this sufficiently manifest. The fact is the more remarkable because, in the opinion of many (among the rest of the Chevalier Bunsen), episcopacy first rose in the East under the appointment of the apostle John. But passages of this letter refer to presbyterial conventions as still in operation, speaking of "gathering every year the elders and the officers in one assembly to dispose of those things which are committed to our charge;" and make mention of conveyance of orders and imposition of hands as belonging to the clergy in general. This letter shows how far the Bishop of Rome was at this time from being regarded as infallible, by abusing him in round terms: "It is true that we are obliged to Stephen (the Roman prelate) for this benefit" (the manifestation of Cyprian's faith and wisdom), "though we give no thanks to him for it. Judas was not thought a worthy man, because of his wickedness and betrayal of Christ, although by his perfidy he accomplished

this good thing, that by his means the world was delivered through the passion of our Lord."* Neither the quarter whence such a letter proceeded, nor that to which it was addressed, was, it is evident, at all approaching that view of things which acknowledges the pope as the head of the whole church, and bows before his absolute decree.

Another circumstance, which occurred during the time of Cyprian, equally demonstrates that the aspirations of the metropolitan church after sovereignty (if, indeed, they had any) were not likely to be very completely gratified. When, at the breaking out of the Decian persecution, Cyprian withdrew himself for a time from the fury of the storm, as we shall see hereafter, the Roman clergy, who had just lost their bishop by the murder of Fabian, wrote a letter to the church of Carthage, unsigned (probably through fear of persecution), in which they counselled and condoled with their spiritual brethren. Among other allusions, they refer to the conduct of the "blessed Pope Cyprian," whom they evidently regarded as a deserter of his trust, not failing to speak of Peter, who followed his Lord afar off, and quoting the passage which represents the hireling fleeing when the wolf cometh. This letter was sent to the church at Carthage, accompanied by a corresponding one addressed to Cyprian himself. The Bishop of Carthage, instead of humbling himself under the metropolitan censure, immediately returned their letter, pointing out the absence of any names appended to it, and asking the significant question, Was it a real letter or an imposture? The matter dropped here.

The Romish Church seems, however, to have cultivated a noble and munificent liberality. A fragment of a letter of Dionysius illustrates this. He writes: "For this practice has prevailed with you from the very beginning, to do good to all the brethren in every way, and to send contributions to many churches in every city, thus refreshing the needy in their want,

* Firmilianus Cypriano, Cypr. Epist., epist. lxxv.

and furnishing to the brethren condemned to the mines what was necessary: by these contributions which ye have been accustomed to send from the beginning, you preserve as Romans the practices of your ancestors." This liberality may be proved by various instances, which show that far down into the fourth century Rome was distinguished for its princely regard for the sufferings which it witnessed around. It was doubtless in a position of advantage above all other churches. "Facts like these," says an admirable writer, "and many others which might be cited, should never be overlooked, when it is sought to explain the enormous influence which the Church of Rome gradually came to wield. It may be fairly doubted whether the circumstance of its being the only apostolical see in the west; or of the city's being the seat of government, and the centre of civilization to the world, in a sense which no modern metropolis — not even Paris — can be said to take the lead of the people of a single country; or the political genius of so many of the early pontiffs; or all these causes put together; could have secured to this church so vast a preponderance as it at length reached, apart from the spirit of active charity, by which it was at first so gloriously distinguished. Thus even the rise of this anti-Christian tyranny may be regarded as illustrating the Christian maxim, that *love is power*."*

The discovery of this lost work of Hippolytus furnishes incontrovertible evidence that the Gospel of John was by no means of that late origin (the end of the second century) ascribed to it by the followers of Strauss. It contains the most conclusive proof that about the year 117 that gospel was already in existence, and took rank among the authenticated Scriptures. Were the discovery of no other value, this fact alone would entitle it to be regarded as of the highest importance.

* Cooper's Free Church of Ancient Christendom, p. 244.

ALEXANDRIA.

# CHAPTER XII.

## ALEXANDRIA: CLEMENS AND ORIGEN.

At the entrance of one of the smaller mouths of the Nile, and on a narrow neck of land intervening between the Mediterranean Sea on the one hand and the Lake Marœotis on the other, stand the remains of the ancient city of Alexandria. The convenience of modern travel, which has resuscitated the ancient mode of reaching India, has restored to this city some of its former importance, and has made it again in modern, as it was formerly in ancient times, the high road to the East. Apart altogether from historical associations, Alexandria presents many features extremely attractive to the traveller. Noah's ark did not contain a more miscellaneous collection of the clean and the

unclean; nor did Jerusalem in its most glorious days so perfectly represent all nations. "Mingling here may be seen the Turk, the Copt, the Jew, the European; here a French lady in the last Parisian bonnet, there Turkish women, enveloped to the eyes in shapeless black wrappers; whilst dirty Christian monks, sallow Moslem dervishes, sore-eyed beggars, naked children covered with flies, and troops of wandering, half-savage dogs, with all the ordinary spectacles of Wapping and Portsmouth, present a singular and ever-shifting kaleidoscope of the more undignified phases of Eastern and Western existence — a perpetual carnival of the motley."

The genius of a first-rate military commander obviously includes many various talents of a high order, and Alexander the Great manifested his possession of these powers by his arrangements for founding at the mouth of the Nile a city which should bear his name. Alexandria owed its erection, under the conqueror's orders, to Dinocrates, a Macedonian, who had already rebuilt the Temple of Diana. As the port of Alexandria was difficult of access, principally in consequence of there being no natural landmarks to guide the eye to its entrance, the well-known Pharos of antiquity was constructed upon a small island at the entrance of the harbor, and on its square marble structure perpetual fires lighted the mariner to his harbor of refuge. The designs of Alexander were admirably seconded by Ptolemy Soter, who, as a resident on the spot, devoted all the resources he could command in science, art and power, to render Alexandria a fit emporium of the traffic between the East and West. That distinction it retained till maritime discovery, having then learned how to regard the ocean as "the highway of nations," diverted the traffic sent from Europe to India by way of the Cape of Good Hope.

But Alexandria was not distinguished by commerce alone Ptolemy Soter founded in it institutions of the highest order in their day, and collected for their benefit a library consisting of seven hundred thousand volumes. The facilities for such a collec-

tion arose out of the discovery of the use of papyrus as a vehicle for written letters; a discovery coincident with the founding of Alexandria by the Macedonian conqueror. It is needless to say, that from the word papyrus is derived the term *paper*, and that from the use of an inner bark of a tree, which was employed for many manuscripts, we gain the Latin word *Liber*, and the Greek βιβλος. Nor must we omit to mention, that when Ptolemy Philadelphus began to form his great library (the volumes of which were copied on this kind of paper), and when Eumenes, King of Pergamos, in imitation, began to erect a rival institution in Asia Minor, the King of Egypt prohibited the exportation of the papyrus from his dominions; a prohibition which led the inhabitants of Pergamos to improve upon the original invention and to write on parchment, thus preparing the way for the facilities of modern literature.

It was in Alexandria also that the Septuagint (that well-known translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek language) was produced for the use of the Hellenistic Jews who dwelt there.

Few memorials remain of the ancient grandeur of this once proud city, yet its imperfect ruins sufficiently indicate its former position. It was originally built in the form of a Macedonian cloak, its outlines having been originally formed (so, at least, says the tradition) by strewing meal around the area it was subsequently to occupy. Its two principal streets stood at right angles with each other, and were a hundred feet wide; the transverse one connecting the harbor with the Lake Marœotis. The premiums held out by Alexander and his successors to those who should form settlements at Alexandria induced many Jews, driven from Palestine by its conflicts and disorders, to settle in the city; and when Onias was expelled from the chief priesthood, the Egyptian Jews acknowledged him as their pontiff, renouncing subjection to the Temple at Jerusalem, and setting up a distinct ecclesiastical establishment at Onion, near to Heliopolis. This temple, like its prototype, contained an altar for

burnt-offering, another for incense, and another for shew-bread; but substituted, in place of the golden candlestick, a lamp suspended from the roof of the building by a golden chain. This took place about the year 150 B. C.

Notwithstanding the protection which the Jews enjoyed in Alexandria, there existed no real concord between them and the other inhabitants of the city; and, in the year A. D. 39, Flaccus, the Roman governor, instigated by the hatred with which the Jews were regarded, encouraged a furious persecution against them, during which they suffered cruel confiscations, and were put to death in great numbers amidst revolting accompaniments of atrocious cruelty. The recall of Flaccus mitigated this state of outrage, till the revolt of the Jews in Palestine excited their countrymen in Alexandria to a tumult, in which fifty thousand were slain.

The Christian religion was introduced into Alexandria by the evangelist Mark, and soon drew together a large multitude of believers. We find that after this a catechetical school was established in the city, of which Pantænus was a master.

This man was originally a Stoic; and continued to profess those sentiments even after he had made profession of the Christian faith. Eusebius relates that his zeal on behalf of Christianity led to his appointment as a missionary to India where he found traces of the gospel by Matthew, which had been conveyed to those quarters by Bartholomew. Pantænus afterwards returned to Alexandria, and died about the commencement of the third century.

It is to this city of Alexandria that we are now about to introduce the reader. It was, at the time of which we write, the second in the Roman empire; and was greatly distinguished for such remnants of antiquity as had survived the reign of the Ptolemies, as well as for the arts and sciences which flourished luxuriantly in its literary soil. The Platonic Gnosticism, which had so disastrously affected the Christian church from an early period, had found in Alexandria many congenial elements, and

had taken a new form there from conjunction with the Jewish Cabbala. Basilides, Valentinus, the Ophites (who derived their name from the serpent of Genesis, and in whose name were included the Sethians and Cainites), and Carpocrates (whose system was distinguished by its gross immorality), had clustered round about this capital of Egypt.

The commencement of the second century beheld, flourishing at Alexandria, Clemens, a disciple of Pantænus, who, however, was only one of his many masters. Clemens was a presbyter of the church, and president of the catechumens. He did not embrace the Christian faith till manhood, and then only as the result of a prolonged process of inquiry and comparison. As he had derived from Pantænus a large infusion of the Gnostic element, he disastrously endeavored to combine it with the purity of Christian truth. When his master went on his Indian mission, Clemens, during some time, occupied his place, till the persecution of Septimius Severus compelled him to withdraw from the capital.

During his absence from Alexandria, his time appears to have been partly occupied by bearing a letter from the Bishop of Jerusalem, imprisoned for the Christian faith, to the Church at Antioch. This Alexander had been bishop of another Christian body in Cappadocia, but was subsequently chosen to join Narcissus, Bishop of Jerusalem, whose extreme age, one hundred and ten years, rendered him unable longer to perform the duties of his office. He afterwards became his successor.* A part

* The ecclesiastical history of Eusebius connects the name of Narcissus with extraordinary prodigies. "About the great watch of the Passover, they say, that whilst the deacons were keeping their vigils, the oil failed them; upon which, all the people being very much dejected, Narcissus commanded the men that managed the lights to draw water from a neighboring well, and to bring it to him. They having done it as soon as said, Narcissus prayed over the water, and then commanded them with a firm faith in Christ to pour it into the lamps. When they had also done this, contrary to all natural expectation, by an extraordinary and divine influence, the nature of the water was changed into the quality of oil; and,"

only of the letter of which Clemens was the bearer is preserved by Eusebius. It is to the following effect:

"Alexander, servant and prisoner of Jesus Christ, greets in the Lord the blessed Church at Antioch.

"The Lord has made my bonds light and easy during the time of my imprisonment, by the information that Asclepias, whose faith qualifies him for the episcopate, has, by divine Providence, undertaken the superintendence of the holy Church at Antioch. . . . . These letters, my brethren, I have sent by Clemens, the blessed presbyter, a man of virtue and estimation, as ye know, and will know still more. He, coming hither by the providence and superintendence of the Lord, has established and increased the Church of God."*

The style of Clemens' religious opinions may be best ascertained from his own words:

"I espouse not this or that philosophy; not the Stoic nor the

adds the historian, with the most believing simplicity, "by most of the brethren a small quantity was preserved from that time until our own, as a specimen of the wonder there performed." The multiplication of alleged miracles was a sign of the times. It was the beginning of the age of pious frauds — perhaps, however, scarcely yet to be designated frauds — and the sad symptom of a falling church. Eusebius relates, moreover, that "certain lewd fellows of the baser sort," not being able to bear the purity of Narcissus' life, invented a slander to destroy his character, and, in bringing their allegations, confirmed it by dreadful oaths. One, for instance, desired that he might perish by fire; another, that he might be wasted by some offensive disease; and another, that he might be deprived of his eyes, if the charges were not true. Their charges received no credence; yet Narcissus, in sorrow and disgust, ran away from his church, and spent many years concealed in the desert. In the mean time the imprecations of these false witnesses were fulfilled. The first was burnt, with his whole family, in consequence of an accidental spark falling upon his house; the second was covered with the particular disease he had named; the third, having confessed his slander, grieved so immoderately for his sin, that he lost the use of both eyes. Similar supernatural manifestations are related by Eusebius to have attended the choice of Alexander for the episcopate, which he held for some time conjointly with Narcissus.

* Euseb., Hist. Eccl., VI. xi.

Platonic, nor the Epicurean, nor that of Aristotle, but whatever any of these sects has said that was fit and right, and that taught righteousness with a divine and religious knowledge; all that, being selected, I call philosophy."

It may be easily inferred that a man possessed of this eclectic cast of mind was more likely to collect incompatible truths into a kind of spiritual museum, than to understand great principles, or to expound a consistent system. Neander has well defined his characteristic features. "By occasional flashes of intellect, he, without doubt, gave a stimulus to the minds of his disciples and readers, as we see particularly from the example of Origen. Many fragmentary ideas, sketched with masterly powers, and containing the germs of a thorough systematic theological system, lie scattered in his works amidst a profusion of vain and hollow speculations."

The works of Clemens of Alexandria which have come down to us are three: — The Exhortation to the Gentiles, the Pedagogue, and the Stromata.

The first of these works is an apology for the Christian faith. The object of the writer is to develop the superiority of the religion of Christ over the systems of pagan mythology. The various forms of heathenism are pointed out with a profusion of learning which is absolutely wearisome, and which could have been at no time well calculated to subserve its professed object. The remedial doctrines of Christianity, though not lost from the view, are exhibited with much looseness; but the moral virtues of the Christian system are dwelt upon with especial emphasis.

A few extracts will exhibit the character of Clemens and of the times. The following is from the conclusion of his "Admonition to the Gentiles," and contains a running spiritualization of the rites and practices of heathen worship. The deflection from the spirit of a simple and pure religion is too apparent in the figures of its Asiatic oratory.

"To what do I exhort thee? I urge thee that thou mayest be saved. This Christ wills; he bestows on thee life by a

word. And what is that word? Learn, in brief: the word of truth; the word of incorruption, which regenerates man by bringing him to the truth; the spur of salvation, which drives away decay, which pursues death, which erects a temple in men that he may put God within them. Let the temple be chaste and pure, and leave pleasures and lusts, like a frail and brief flower, to the wind and flames. . . Let us fly from the threatening Charybdis, and the fabulous Sirens. . . Let us fly, let us fly, O companions! this water belches out flames; the island is accursed; it is full of bones and carcasses; in them sings that beautiful courtesan, Pleasure. If only thou willest, thou shalt overcome destruction, and, by being bound to this cross, shalt be free from death. The Logos of God shall lead thee, and the Holy Spirit shall bring thee to the gate of salvation. Then shalt thou look upon my God, and shall be initiated into those mysteries which are laid up in heaven, and are reserved for me; which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and which have not risen in the heart of man. . . Come, O wanderer, neither leaning on the thyrsus, nor bound with the ivy! * throw away the head-band; throw away the fawn-skin; be temperate and moderate; I will show thee the Logos, and the mysteries of the Logos accommodating it to thy capacity. For this is the chosen mount of God; not given up to tragedies, like Cithæron, but devoted to the dramas of truth; this is the mountain of temperance, shady with chaste woods. In it Bacchics are performed; not by the Bacchican sisters, struck with lightning, but by the daughters of God, chaste lambs, who celebrate the venerable orgies of the Logos, by a collection of those who compose a chorus of moderation. This chorus is made up of the just; their song is the hymn of the God of all; virgins play; angels give glory; prophets speak; the sound of music goes forth, &c. &c. Such are the Bacchics of my mysteries! If thou be willing, and will shut thine eyes, thou shalt

* These are allusions to the mysteries of Bacchus.

join in chorus with angels around him who is the unbegotten, and indestructible, and only God. Let us join in a hymn together to God, the Logos. He is eternal; the one Jesus Christ, who, as the great high priest of one God, who himself is the Father, prays for men, and thus exhorts men:

"'Hear, ye innumerable nations, or rather all among you that are reasonable men, whether barbarians or Greeks (says Jesus, the high priest), I call the whole race of men, of whom I am the Demiurge * by the will of the Father. Come to me, ranged under one God and one Logos of God; you cannot overcome the inanimate world by reason alone. From among all other mortals I give it to you to reap the fruits of immortality; for I earnestly desire, as the perfection of all benefits, to give to you incorruptibility. I give to you the Logos, that is, the knowledge of God; I bestow on you my perfect self. This God wills; this is the symphony, this the harmony, of the Father. This is the Son; this is the Christ; this is the Logos of God; the arm of the Lord; the power of the universe; the will of the Father. For we are all his likeness, yet not all his true likeness. I desire to correct you, that ye may be like to me. I will anoint you with the oil of faith, that ye may put off corruption, and will show you the naked figure of righteousness, by which ye may ascend to God. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, so shall ye find rest to your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Let us hasten, let us run, O lovers of God, and O men! Godlike images of the Logos of God, let us bear his yoke; let us take in incorruption the renowned charioteer of men, Jesus Christ.'" †

What the general nature of Clemens' next treatise is may be conjectured by some selections from its contents. It is entitled "The Pedagogue," or "The Instructor." Under this name the

* The favorite term of the Gnostics.

† Clem. Alex., Admonitio (in fine).

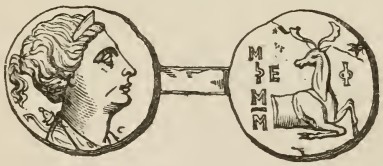
author doubtless intended to set forth the Divine Author of the Christian religion himself; and the whole treatise is intended to exhibit practical Christianity according to the manner in which the author himself understood it.

The first book describes, accordingly, the character of this Pedagogue. In the next book, the author curiously descends into the peculiarities of what he meant to represent as the Christian life. He treats of eating, amidst many wise and prudent maxims, such as might naturally be expected on such a topic. To render his observations more definite, however, the author gives a copious catalogue of the Epicurean substantialities of his day, not failing to bestow his pity upon those who not only heaped up such delicacies on the table, but even boasted of them; such as the lampreys of Sicily, the eels of Mœandria, the kids of Melos, the mullets of Sciathos, the shell-fish of Pelorus, the oysters of Abydena, &c.; and exhorts rather to support life upon onions, olives, herbs, milk, cheese, fruits, and such things as are cooked without trouble, or occasionally on roast or boiled meats. He recommends wine (in his chapter on drinking) to be used with great moderation, and not to be resorted to by the young. He denounces luxury in furniture, as tending to waste and pride. In his chapter on "feasts" he takes occasion to declaim against the use of instrumental music in the service of God, accompanying his observations by several conceits in reference to David's enumeration of musical instruments; contending that by the trumpet is to be understood that of the resurrection, by the psaltery the tongue, by the lute the mouth, by the timbrel and dance the church, &c. &c. He writes against undue laughter, and against indecent conversation; and teaches how to sit at table, and generally how to conduct one's self; entering into various minute particulars (some of them ridiculously trivial) on the most ordinary practices of common life. He deprecates the use of perfumes and unguents. He declaims against long sleep, declaring that a slumbering man is as useless as a dead one, and that it is de-

sirable often to arise in the night for the purpose of praising God. He prescribes the observances of domestic life in a spirit of great austerity, and rejects the use of ornamental dress and all jewels on the person.

In the third book he comes to the mention of corresponding virtues. A general notion of the contents may be derived from the headings of some of the chapters. Concerning true beauty; against love of dress; with whom we should associate; how men ought to behave in baths; that only the Christian is rich; that frugality is an admirable travelling companion for a Christian; that example is the best part of doctrine; why men should go to the baths; in what way a Christian should live, &c. &c.

The other principal work of Clemens consists of what he designates "Stromata," which term means, literally, a piece of tapestry, or a thing spread out, and is a collection of miscellaneous matters relative to various points which stand in relation to Christianity; in truth, an assemblage of the most varied character, though much has been derived from it relative to the practices of Christian antiquity. To Clemens we are indebted, among other elucidations, for the explanation of the Ephesian letters.



COIN OF DIANA.

Alexandria deserves no small honor from having been the birthplace of the celebrated Origen, who first saw the light about the year 186. His father's name was Leonides; his mother's, though she is often referred to, remains unknown.

He early received a Christian education, and was carefully instructed in the Scriptures, portions of which he was made to commit to memory daily. Origen was one of seven sons, and was distinguished from his childhood by his remarkable genius and his astonishing memory. In his very youth he was an eager investigator of the sacred writings, and was bent on penetrating beyond the mere letter of the Scriptures, frequently drawing down upon himself the remonstrances of his father for his undue curiosity, and his caution against the dangers into which a speculative disposition was likely to lead him. Yet so great was the admiration with which Leonides regarded his son, that he would frequently steal into the room in which the little Origen lay asleep, that he might imprint his kiss upon the bared breast of the child, as if it were already a place in which the Holy Spirit had taken up its residence. Origen was distinguished by the surname Adamantius, having reference to his "iron" perseverance; but whether it was given by his parent, or assumed by himself, or affixed to his name after his decease, cannot be pronounced with certainty.

In the fifteenth year of Origen's life, the Emperor Severus began a new persecution of the Christians (A. D. 202). For some years previous to this event, the bitterness which that ruler had exhibited against the disciples of Jesus had slumbered, owing, it is said, to the intervention of a favorite named Proculus. But Severus, having now returned in victory from the East, issued an edict to prevent conversions to Judaism or Christianity, the effect of which was severely felt in Egypt. One of the victims of this measure was Leonides, father of Origen. When he was imprisoned, Origen was with difficulty restrained from declaring himself a Christian, and thus participating in the honor (as he regarded it) of his father's martyrdom. To prevent this rash act, his mother resorted to the expedient of concealing his clothes. The son, however, wrote to his father, exhorting him to courage and constancy, and urging his parent not to change his mind for the sake of his

family. This early devotion to the cause of Christ was a rich promise of the future — a promise abundantly realized in his maturer years.

Leonides suffered death for his attachment to the truth; his property was confiscated; and Origen, with his mother and her six children, was left destitute. But Providence opened a door of relief. A wealthy widow of Alexandria took the young saint under her protection. Her motive for this was perhaps not so much her approval of the catholic doctrine for which Leonides had suffered, as a compassionate pity for the sorrows of his forsaken family; for it appears that she had received at the same time under her roof, and brought up as her son, a Gnostic teacher, Paul of Antioch, who was permitted to lecture on his peculiar and heretical views in her house. Towards him, however, Origen felt no sympathy; on the contrary, he refused to join in his assemblies, or to unite with him in prayer.

Origen's successful cultivation of literature speedily enabled him to become an instructor, and the repute which his learning gained for him in Alexandria made him independent of eleemosynary aid. He became distinguished for his knowledge in geometry, music, arithmetic, dialectics, and philosophy; and he added to these an acquaintance with Hebrew, a language then little cultivated, especially by Christians. These attainments raised him to the post of catechist at Alexandria, though now only eighteen years of age.

But the ardor of this celebrated man did not confine itself to the pursuits of literature. His life was blameless; and his energy in behalf of Christianity rendered him conspicuous. He was a constant visitor of those who under the existing persecution suffered for their faith; and he not unfrequently accompanied them to their death, careless of the enmity he was thus arousing against himself. He was often compelled to seek safety by flying from his watchful foes. On one occasion he was caught by a mob, who carried him to the steps of the temple of Serapis, where, having placed in his hand a palm-branch, they

ordered him to give portions of it, according to the usual idolatrous practice, to the assembling worshippers. Origen made a show of obedience, but to every one who presented himself said, instead of the usual formula, "Take this palm, not the sign of the idol, but of Christ."

In the midst of this opposition, however, Origen's teaching became extensively popular, and as his office of catechist to the church of Alexandria was without stipend, and therefore left him without means, he disposed of his secular books, of which he had procured an extensive collection, and lived upon the produce derived from their sale, — four oboli (about fivepence) per day, — limiting himself to a life of the most self-denying asceticism. His nights as well as his days were devoted to study. Taking many of the precepts of our Lord according to the most rigid interpretation of the letter, he confined himself to one coat and to one pair of shoes — accustomed himself to poverty and to imperfect clothing; and even maimed his body that he might avoid temptation, and not fail of those rewards which he understood to have been attached by the Divine Lord (mistaking his spiritual meaning) to a life of self-denial. When this last fact was told to Demetrius, the Bishop of Alexandria, he applauded the motive under which the young man had acted, though, at a subsequent period, he turned it to Origen's disadvantage.

In the mean time the effects of Severus' persecution were felt in the desolations of the church. Plutarch, one of Origen's disciples, suffered for his faith. Origen stood by him at his execution, and with difficulty escaped the penalty of having been his accomplice. Serenus, Heraclides, Heron, are also mentioned as having been martyrs for their Christianity. Another Serenus also suffered a violent death, as also Rais, a catechumen. Among the martyrs of this period, a distinguished place is given by Eusebius to Potamiæna, a young woman whose chastity and courage were strongly displayed. She was

conspicuous for her personal beauty, and not less so for her mental accomplishments. A series of torments was prepared for her by Aquila, her judge. At length she was condemned to die under the hands of Basilides, a military officer. But her sufferings won the pity of the soldier, who defended her to some extent from the fury of the spectators. Touched with his sympathy, she acknowledged his kindness towards her, and promised him her prayers and an abundant reward for his kindness. Boiling pitch was poured upon her body from her feet to her head. She bore the torment with the utmost magnanimity, and died in the faith. Soon after, Basilides himself refused to take the usual military oath, and avowed himself a Christian. He was apprehended for the offence and imprisoned, and, when visited afterwards by the Christians, he declared that he had seen in a vision Potamiæna, who had seemed to place on three successive nights a crown on his head. Basilides was beheaded; and the example (Eusebius credulously says the apparition) of Potamiæna induced many others to submit to martyrdom rather than deny the religion of Jesus.

In the mean time Origen continued his wonderful course of labor and study, cherishing the utmost dread lest the pleasures of the world might prove too attractive to him. Commenting afterwards upon Luke 14: 33, in the course of one of his homilies on Genesis, he says, "Let us hear Christ our Lord and the precepts he gives to his priests, 'Whosoever there be among you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.' I tremble at the words I repeat. For above all others I am my own accuser, I speak my own condemnation; I fear to be accused of being a participator in this crime. I confess before all the people who hear me, I confess that these things are so written; and I know that I have not yet fulfilled them. But let us after this warning at least endeavor to fulfil it, let us hasten to pass away from the priesthood of Pharaoh, whose possessions are earthly possessions, to the priesthood of the

Lord, who have no portion on earth, but who have the Lord for their portion."*

The persecution under Severus ceased, with the death of that emperor, in the year A. D. 211. Origen availed himself of the favorable conjuncture to visit the church at Rome, of which Zephyrinus was then bishop. For the character of this ecclesiastic, whom the Romish Church has canonized, the reader is referred to the last chapter. Origen was now twenty-six years of age. He made only a brief stay in Rome, and returned to Alexandria, resuming, at the request of Demetrius, his post of catechist to the church in that city. The number who crowded to him for instruction was so great as not only to occupy his days, but even to invade his nights, and to deprive him of all opportunity of pursuing his studies. Heraclas, therefore, who had preëminently distinguished himself among the pupils of Origen, was called in to assist, and the rudimental instructions were specially committed to his care, whilst the more advanced disciples remained under the charge of the great doctor himself.

Origen was now at the summit of his reputation. He was the instructor of a great number of disciples. According to the testimony even of Porphyry, he was possessed of most extensive learning, and well versed in philosophy in all its branches. Porphyry adds, that Origen, having gone accidentally into the school where Plotinus, the celebrated Platonist, was lecturing, so confounded that haughty teacher by his very presence, as to render him who boasted continually of his superiority to circumstances confused, and unable for a time to proceed; though he availed himself afterwards of the occasion for passing a high compliment on the interrupter.

One of the pupils of Origen was Ambrose, in his day highly distinguished as one of the most esteemed noblemen of the court. Ambrose had been originally a Gnostic, but had been,

* Origen, in Genesin, Hom. xvi. 5.

by means of Origen's instruction, led to the true faith. As he was a man of wealth, he gratefully devoted his means to second the labors of his master, and he employed seven amanuenses to write from Origen's dictation, and seven more to assist in the requisite transcriptions.

It was about this time that Origen composed his famous "Tetrapla" or "Hexapla,"— for many different names are affixed to it. This work consisted of a text formed from the Hebrew Scriptures, with many other versions, ranged in parallel columns by its side, and was, though no marvel in more modern days, an extraordinary instance of learning and diligence for the times in which it was produced.

Origen's next journey was undertaken at the request of the Roman governor of Arabia Petræa, who, wishing to consult the divine on some important subject, had sent a special request for his presence. His stay was not long, and he speedily resumed his work at Alexandria. He was however compelled, in consequence of a serious riot, to leave his home again, and he visited Cæsarea, in Palestine. It has been imagined by Tillemont and Huet that the cause of this absence was the massacre which took place in the amphitheatre at Alexandria, by command of Caracalla, because the Alexandrians had turned his person and his vices into ridicule. (A. D. 216.)

Whilst at Cæsarea he was invited to expound the Scriptures, a task for which his abilities seemed to render him specially qualified, though he was not as yet a presbyter, but a layman only. His expositions were attended by the bishops of the district, whose office we may now mark as bearing with it the decided superiority of a third order. The news of this elevation given to Origen roused the envy of Demetrius, his own bishop, and he loudly censured the precedent of a layman being permitted to expound the Scriptures before those of ecclesiastical rank. Among those by whom Origen was thus called forth, Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem, who had been Origen's fellow-student, was conspicuous. Demetrius, as if he had been

a sovereign prince, recalled Origen, sending a special embassy of deacons for that purpose. He resumed his labors at Alexandria.

To meet and confute the heresies which abounded in Greece, Origen next visited that country; and, as he passed through Palestine, on his way thither, he received ordination as a presbyter at the hands of his friend Alexander, who, with other bishops, met him at Cæsarea. Demetrius was now seriously offended, and roused into a state of anger altogether unworthy of a Christian bishop. Origen was at this time forty-three years old.*

Caracalla was now succeeded on the throne of the Cæsars by Elagabalus, his natural son, a besotted and vicious youth, whose name has passed into a proverb. Elagabalus, soon after his accession, visited Antioch, in company with his Aunt Mammæa. Mammæa was a woman of piety and virtue. She had sent for Origen, who visited her perhaps at the period, providing a military escort to accompany him, and listened to him after his arrival with great eagerness. After a stay of some duration, Origen went back to Alexandria, having possibly succeeded by his influence at court in preventing any open persecution of the Christians during this reign.

Being arrived again in Egypt, he found a most embittered enemy in Demetrius, his former friend, who assailed him with the utmost acrimony, especially accusing him of the rash action which had distinguished his youth. Yet, notwithstanding this hostility, Origen found time to publish many treatises, among which may be mentioned his Commentaries on John, on Genesis, on certain of the Psalms, and on the Lamentations. He wrote at the same time his Stromata and Principia; the last work exemplifying strongly that tendency to mix Platonism with Christianity which so much distinguished him. But Origen declared that Ambrose had given it circulation without his own consent.

* Huetii Origeniana, l. i.

The prelatical tendencies of Demetrius, however, combining with jealousy against so exemplary a teacher of the Christian faith, led him to prefer severe charges against Origen, whose meekness did not disarm his acrimony. The bishop accordingly convened a synod, accusing Origen of being disqualified for holding any office, and probably swelling the charge by the further declaration that he had offered incense to the heathen idols. The council decreed that Origen should be deprived of his rank as presbyter, that he should be interdicted from the exercise of all spiritual functions in the church at Alexandria, and that he should leave that city. In the mean time Heraclas was appointed catechist in his place.

Persecuted thus, this celebrated man retired to Cæsarea, where he was received with great distinction, and where he resumed the functions of his ministry. But Demetrius still pursued him. Availing himself of certain sentiments contained in his works, especially in that to which we have already alluded, though Origen complained that his writings had been interpolated, a charge of heresy was exhibited against Origen, and a sentence of excommunication pronounced. This proceeding was taken with the concurrence of the church of Rome, and only the churches of Palestine and the surrounding regions showed sympathy with the deposed presbyter.

Meantime Origen continued at Cæsarea, where he preached with great frequency. The spirit with which he met his aggravated trials was worthy of a Christian. He said that a believer was made "not to curse, but to bless." He gradually gathered around him a body of young men, whom he instructed in the doctrines of Christianity, thus preparing them to be the future heralds of the truth. Among these were Gregory, who afterwards bore the name of Thaumaturgus, and became in process of time Bishop of Neocesarea, and his brother Athenodorus. Here Origen produced (dedicating it to his pupil Ambrose, now a deacon of the church at Cæsarea), his treatise on the Lord's

Prayer, and his other work on Prayer, and exercised a very extensive spiritual influence.

Maximin was now (A. D. 235) Emperor of Rome. He obtained this dignity by the murder of Alexander, son of Mammæa, who had succeeded Elagabalus. Under him began what is known as the sixth persecution. His instructions were that the pastors of churches especially should be put to death. Ambrose seems to have suffered much from the consequent outrages, together with Protocletus, a presbyter of the church at Cæsarea. At this time Origen wrote his tract on Martyrdom, in order to confirm these his friends in their present trial. This treatise, though not free from errors, marks the courageous spirit by which the writer was actuated, and which he exhorts those whom he addressed to maintain, for the love of Christ and in prospect of an eternal reward.

At this time Origen was in Cappadocia, where he remained during a considerable time secreted in the house of Juliana, a Christian lady of rank. On the death of Maximin (A. D. 238) he returned to Palestine, where he pursued his private studies and public labors, and produced his homilies on Isaiah, Ezekiel, and the Canticles, laboring also with unwearied assiduity on the Hexapla. He appears now to have made a second journey into Greece. On his return he wrote his reply to Celsus, an Epicurean, who had attacked the doctrines of the Christian faith, together with his commentary on Matthew. He was now sixty years of age, and, as he was no longer able to devote his time so assiduously as heretofore to composition in his closet, short-hand writers were employed to take down his discourses as he delivered them in public.

In the year 249, Decius assumed the purple, and a terrible tempest of persecution followed his accession to the throne. All preceding outrages were surpassed by this outbreak, to which the attention of the reader will be more specifically drawn hereafter. At this time Alexander, the Bishop of Jerusalem, who had so constantly befriended Origen, died in prison. The aged Origen

suffered cruelly. He was condemned to wear an iron collar; he was stretched on the rack; was loaded with irons; was confined in the darkest and most loathsome dungeons, and threatened with death by fire. All kinds of torments short of those which might put a period to his sufferings were heaped upon him during two years, without shaking his resolution, till the death of Decius opportunely released him. But he was now old and exhausted, and Ambrose having died without making provision for his master, was called to endure all the privations of poverty. He died at Tyre in his sixty-ninth year, A. D. 254.

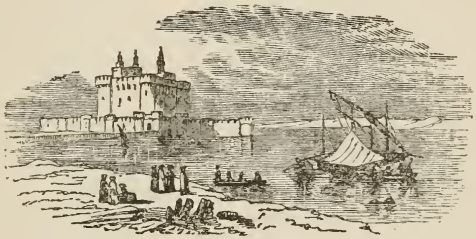
Whatever exceptions may be taken to the theological views of Origen, he was, unquestionably, one of the brightest lights of the Christian church. His industry was marvellous; no fewer than six thousand treatises having been, perhaps with some exaggeration, ascribed to his pen. He is said to have preached most of his homilies extemporaneously; though, as a natural consequence, he is often chargeable with too great discursiveness, and sometimes with incoherency. He was a master in philosophy, which he allowed to tincture his views, and often to debase his perceptions of scriptural truth. His love of allegory was strong and unconquerable, and many of those far-fetched allusions by which vulgar preachers love to disguise simple doctrine, which attract the ignorant and mislead the unwary, may be traced to his pages as their real original. But his integrity was above suspicion, and his resolute adherence to Christianity in the midst of the severest trials gives him an eminence only to be surpassed by apostolic fortitude itself. His love for the Scriptures was supereminent. The labors of his life were bestowed upon their collection, defence and exposition, and he enforced the duty of studying them upon his pupils in the strongest terms.

It is not very easy to determine what were Origen's precise views regarding the Trinity, as his book "De Principiis" does not now exist in the Greek, and has been confessedly interpolated by Rufinus, his translator. He is, however, accused by

Jerome, doubtless with truth, of having represented the Son as, in some measure, inferior to the Father. He held the efficacy of the death of Christ to extend even to angels, devils, and irrational creatures; and that there was a double sacrifice, — one made on earth, and another in heaven. He speculated much on the nature of angels, believing that they are by no means free from faults, for which they shall be hereafter judged; that every man had his guardian-angel, and that these beings may be addressed with an inferior homage; also that the stars were regulated in their motions by presiding spirits. He believed in the termination of the torments of hell. He strongly asserted the doctrine of free-will, and regarded grace as having relation to the good and evil which men do in the use of their natural liberty. He held that sins committed after the gift of the Holy Ghost were not within the reach of pardon, and that when Peter denied Christ he had not received the Holy Spirit. Whilst maintaining the doctrine of the Resurrection both of the just and unjust, he speaks of the righteous as passing through fire, — which, however, he elsewhere explains to mean remorse of conscience. He regarded baptism as possessing a sanctifying power, and as the commencement of a series of divine influences, though such influences were by no means independent of the state of the heart. In like manner, though the bread of the Lord's Supper was, in his opinion, not distinguishable from common food, yet to those who received it aright it conveyed supernatural influence through the medium of the language employed in its consecration. Origen opposed the usual views of the Millenarians of his day, and resisted the literal sense which they gave to certain passages of sacred Scripture.

So voluminous was Origen as a writer, that Jerome ascribes to him the composition of six thousand volumes. It is probable, however, that this large number included a multitude of tracts and fugitive compositions. By far the greater part of the works of Origen have perished. The following may be taken as a specimen of his fantastical manner of interpreting scripture.

Speaking of Israel in Egypt: Pharaoh represents, he says, the Devil. His command to kill the young male children and to save the female, means that the devil wishes to preserve the worst parts of our nature and to destroy the good. Pharaoh's daughter means the church; and the finding of Moses represents the respect which the church has for the Law.* When Origen speaks of our Lord commissioning Peter to cast his hook into the sea, promising him that he should find a piece of money with which to pay the demand of the tribute-gatherers, he interprets the fish taken by Peter to mean a carnal man caught by the gospel and becoming dead to the world; and, as the fish opens its mouth to drop the money into the hands of Peter, so



ALEXANDRIA.

he represents the converted man to part with his narrow and avaricious views, and to devote his money to the service of God and his church. In a similar manner he interprets the parable of the Good Samaritan. The benevolent man is representative of our Lord; the injured traveller, of the sinful race of mankind; the priest and Levite, of the moral and ceremonial law. The inn indicates the church; the landlord, the minister of God; and the two pieces of money, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Such conceits as these might, no doubt, prove attractive in the ears of some of the Alexandrians to whom they were addressed; and they have been frequently imitated by those who can "find

* Origenis Comment. in Exod., Hom. i.—iv.

as much of the marrow of divinity in the fat of a kidney as in the whole of our Lord's Sermon on the Mount," but they must ever derogate from the true merit of the Alexandrian Father as an expositor of gospel truth. These instances might be abundantly multiplied, did our space permit. The faults of Origen must not, however, blind us to his distinguished excellences, which have been the theme of almost universal praise. His pulpit addresses were often singularly faithful, and his oratory incomparable. "Why should I refer to his eloquence," says Vincentius Lyra, "when his speech was so pleasant, so cheerful, so sweet, as that to me his mouth seemed to distil not words, but honey?"*

* Vincent. Lyrensis contr. Hæres. c. 23.

# CHAPTER XIII.

## CARTHAGE AND CYPRIAN.

The church of Carthage, though desolation has now swept away every trace of the city in which it was founded, was (as we have already seen) eminent in the early days of Christianity for its pious energy, and its illustrious maintenance of scriptural truth. A striking instance of this was afforded during the persecution of Severus, to which reference has been already made. Amongst those who suffered in this city for their attachment to Christ, a body of young catechumens stands peculiarly distinguished. In the year 204, Minutius Firmanus apprehended the following Christians: Revocatus and Felicitas, who were fellow-slaves of one household; Saturninus Secundulus; and Vivia Perpetua, a woman of rank, beauty, and distinguished virtues. The history of this young lady is peculiarly interesting and affecting. She was beloved of her parents, her mother being a Christian and her father a pagan, and had an infant at her breast. Her age was twenty-two. Her father, though he felt deeply for his daughter's

probable sufferings, endured still more from the apprehension of the disgrace which her avowal of Christianity would bring upon her family. Whilst, therefore, the confessors were kept under guard in a private house, before being sent to prison, her father came to her, and, with all the eloquence which the most tender affection could suggest, earnestly besought her to recant her superstition, and return once more to her sorrowing friends. The plea was powerful — the danger, imminent and dreadful. But Perpetua was unmoved. She pointed to a vessel on the floor, and said, "Can I call this vessel other than it is?" And when the father said "No," she continued, "Neither can I call myself by any other name than that of Christian." Whilst thus in confinement, as the access of Christian presbyters was not denied, she received baptism, and afterwards declared that at the time of its administration she was prompted to pray for nothing but patience to bear her future trials. She was soon after this consigned to a dark dismal jail, where she suffered much from the heat of the prisoners crowding around her, from the ill-treatment of the soldiers, and from the absence of her infant; till the deacons purchased for her and her companions the use of a more commodious apartment. Her child was now restored to her, and afterwards committed by her to her mother, whom, with her brother, she endeavored to console under their woes. "After a few days," she said, "my sorrow was changed into comfort, and the dungeon became a palace to me."

In this state her brother asked her to pray that she might be made to know whether this imprisonment would terminate in death; and on the next day she told him that in a remarkable dream, with which she had been favored, she had been taught that her martyrdom was at hand. A short time after, her aged father, who had been greatly irritated by her previous firmness, and had even struck her in his frenzy, came to her once more, having ascertained that she was to be brought the next day before the magistrate. Once more he besought her to retract. He reminded her of the peculiar affection with which she had

been ever regarded — of her mother and her other beloved relatives, and of her infant child, so soon to be deprived of her fostering care. "Abandon your obstinacy," said he, "or you will destroy us all: not one of us will be able to speak any more with boldness, if thou diest thus." As he uttered these words the tortured father took her hands and kissed them, threw himself weeping at her feet, and called her not his daughter, but the mistress of his fate. Perpetua was deeply moved at the sight of her father's gray hairs; more deeply, because, as she said, she felt "that he alone of all her family could not rejoice in her sufferings," but her reply was distinct and decisive: "Father," she said, "grieve not; what will happen when I come before the tribunal depends on the will of God; for know that we stand not in our own strength, but in the power of God."

The day following the prisoners were summoned to examination. They appeared at the bar in the midst of a great crowd. Perpetua's interrogation came last. All the rest had boldly confessed their Master. At this juncture her father appeared with her infant in his arms, and renewed his entreaty that she would abjure Christianity for the sake of the child whom he held. Even the judge was melted by the affecting scene, and added his entreaties to those of her father. "Sacrifice," said he, "for the welfare of the emperor." "That," said Perpetua, "I cannot do." "Art thou, then, a Christian?" "I am a Christian." Her father endeavored to draw her off; but the president now interposed, and commanded him to be beaten. "That blow I felt," said Perpetua, "as if I had been myself struck, so affected was I at beholding my father thus treated in his old age."

The prisoners were condemned to death, and were sentenced to be thrown to wild beasts, in public, on the anniversary of young Geta's accession. In the mean time they returned to their cells. Perpetua desired again to see her child; but her father forbade it, and only renewed his former entreaties. The

recital, thus far, is derived from the pen of Perpetua herself, who thus affectingly concludes her narrative: "Thus have I written on the eve of the spectacle. Another, if he pleases, will describe what happened there." The remainder of the narrative is less authentic; but its substantial facts are doubtless truly given.

Felicitas, the female companion of Perpetua, was seized, on the eve of her martyrdom, with the pangs of child-birth. One of the guards said to her in her anguish, "If thou complainest now, what wilt thou do when thrown to the wild beasts?" Her answer was truly memorable. "What I suffer now, I suffer myself; but at the spectacle there will be another who will suffer for me, because I shall suffer for him."

The day before the martyrdom the prisoners were allowed a feast, according, it appears, to a usual custom; and they partook of it in public, eating it as an Agapé, or feast of love. In the midst of this banquet one of the martyrs, observing the curiosity of the spectators, said, "Look at us well, that you may be able to recognize us at the day of judgment." When the time of execution was arrived, an attempt was made to clothe them, as it appears was usual at Carthage, in sacerdotal garments. But the martyrs resisted this imposition, saying, "We have come here voluntarily, that our freedom may not be taken from us. We have given up our lives rather than be forced to such abominations." Their resistance was successful, and the attempt was relinquished.

The men were exposed to a leopard, a bear, and a wild boar, and one of them was despatched instantly.

Perpetua and Felicitas were thrown to a wild cow, having been previously enclosed in a net. Perpetua was first gored by the furious animal, but, recovering herself after the attack, gathered her garments together, and helped Felicitas, who had been afterwards outraged, to rise. They stood thus together, as if awaiting another assault. But, as the people cried out that they should not be again exposed to the fury of the wild animal,

they were led away to be put to death by the confectors. Perpetua was now addressed by some of the Christians present; but she was apparently unconscious of all that had occurred, and could not believe it till she was shown the wounds which had been inflicted on her.* The surviving prisoners were placed in the centre of the area, and, having embraced each other for the last time, were despatched with swords. The person into whose hands Perpetua fell was so unskilful, and trembled so violently, as to give her many wounds which were not mortal, till Perpetua, taking his hand, directed it to her throat.

The bodies of these martyrs are said to have been afterwards deposited in the church of Carthage, and their "natal day" (as the anniversaries of the martyrs were termed) was celebrated on the 7th of March. Their memories are still preserved in the calendar of the English church.

We now arrive at a period of ecclesiastical history in which the extant letters of its most celebrated personage enable us better to illustrate the character of the times. A special interest, however, attaches itself to this crisis, from the fact that the episcopal system of church-government had now become clearly and strongly established; every lover, therefore, of monarchical spiritual rule dwells with the fondest interest on the memory and acts of Cyprian; and, from this period, whatever the church may have gained in organization and order, it unquestionably lost in liberty.

Thascius Cyprianus, commonly known by the name of Cyprian, was by birth an African. and, in the early years of his life, a heathen. The precise year of his birth is not known, nor are we acquainted with many details relative to his early career. It appears, however, that he had received a liberal education, and had been a popular teacher of rhetoric in Carthage, by which profession he had gained considerable wealth. A presbyter, named Cæcilianus, an aged Christian, was the means of

* See page 355.

converting him to the faith of Christ. This change in his religious opinions led to the most important results. He became deeply humbled under a sense of sin, and strongly convinced of the power of that grace which alone could save him. A letter to his friend Donatus will best describe his feelings on this occasion. The reader will mark for himself certain passages expressive of departure from the truth.

"Whilst I was languishing in the darkness of profound night, and whilst floating upon the stormy sea of the age, I was uncertain what I ought to do; and, rebelling against light and truth, I found it extremely hard to believe that which they told me of the goodness of God in saving sinners; and that it was necessary to be born again in such a manner that, receiving a new life in the waters of baptism, one must put away all that one had delighted in before; and that a man must entirely change his spirit, whilst his body remained the same. How, said I, is so great a change possible? How can one undo at once that which nature and habit have rendered so strong? These are things profoundly rooted in the soul. How can a man accustomed to good living learn in a moment to be sober? Is it possible that a woman who is always richly clothed, and who has worn till now dresses of gold and silk, can resolve to attire herself simply and modestly; or that another, who has passed his life in great duties and employments, can reduce himself to a private condition; and he who is always accompanied by a crowd of persons attending on him, will he not regard solitude as a punishment? It must be that those who have lived so long under the empire of their passions will be governed by them; that debauchery will entice them; that pride will inflate them; that anger will inflame them; that avarice will torment them; that vengeance will animate them; that ambition will charm them; that pleasure will destroy them." *

"But when, the filth of my past life being washed away by

* Ad Donatum.

the saving water of regeneration, the light from on high spread itself in my heart, — when, having received the Holy Ghost, a second birth caused me to become a new man, — immediately my doubts became clear, my soul was opened, my darkness was dissipated; what I had found difficult seemed easy, and I saw that I could accomplish that which, till now, seemed impossible. You know yourself, as well as I, and acknowledge what this death of our crimes has taken away within us, and what this life of virtue has inserted. You know it, and I have nothing to do but to proclaim it ; for self-praise is odious, though we should say nothing but what is true, but should attribute all the glory to God, and not to man." *

Pontius, deacon of Cyprian, who wrote the life of that celebrated man, relates the effects which followed his conversion. He tells us that, believing ambition to be the most dangerous of the vices, Cyprian sold all his goods to feed the poor, and that he began to attempt the perfection of Christianity almost before he knew what Christianity really was. The generous self-renunciation by which Cyprian's conversion had been distinguished rendered him an object of love to the Christians around. He was ordained presbyter, and soon after the bishopric of Carthage, being vacant, was offered to him; and, when he refused the post of honor, Cyprian's house was crowded by multitudes of the people entreating him to accept it. At length, though most reluctantly, he was compelled to receive this trust; to which he was called, as Pontius tells us, by the judgment of God and the suffrages of the people.

The general popularity, however, which urged the episcopacy upon Cyprian, did not prevent the malevolence of a small party, who were possibly influenced by personal motives in the opposition which they raised to the new bishop.

As soon as Cyprian was installed in his recent office, one of his first acts was to endeavor to govern his charge under the

* Ad Donatum.

advice of the presbyters, and with the consent of the people. "He knew," says Pontius, "how to temper his gentleness with firmness, and his condescension with episcopal vigor. His dress was neither sumptuous nor mean, but proper and modest; because there is often not less ambition in affected poverty than in luxury. As it regarded the poor, what would he not do for them as bishop who had done so much for them as a mere catechumen?"*

While Cyprian was thus devoting himself to the duties of his new ministry, an unexpected storm burst out against the church. The death of Philip, who had befriended the Christians, led to the exaltation of Decius, his murderer, to the imperial throne. No sooner had he attained this elevation, than, with a design entirely to extirpate Christianity, he commanded, in the year 250, that all who did not conform to the national heathen ceremonials should be threatened, tortured, and, in case of obstinacy, put to death. This persecution was felt not at Rome alone, but gradually enlarged its sphere of operation, till it extended over the whole empire. Its administration was systematic and severe. A day was appointed from which the imperial edict should date its enforcement; and on that day all Christians of the locality were commanded to be present, that they might swear allegiance to the ancient heathenism. Should they have exiled themselves through fear of persecution, their property was confiscated, and they were forbidden, under capital penalties, to return to their homes. Those who were within reach of the magistracy were examined; were, in case of their examination not proving satisfactory, submitted to the torture; were frequently exposed to deprivation of sustenance; and were sometimes, though not inevitably, punished with death. Bribery, however, gained relief for a few who might otherwise have been deemed worthy of extreme punishment; and some who were really Christians allowed others, in ignorance of the actual fact,

* Pontius, Cypriani Vita.

to declare that their brethren had complied with the requisitions of the law. But such a deception was rightly regarded by the body of believers as unworthy and traitorous to their Christian profession. The influence of worldly fears shook the constancy of many who had large possessions or situations of emolument. The time had gone by when every avowed believer would suffer the last penalty rather than renounce his faith. Some prevaricated; some abjured; some denied; and some, at first firm, confessed their weakness when subjected to the torture. But though a willingness to submit to martyrdom was by no means universal, it was not uncommon. Among the rest, special mention is made of Dioscorus, a youth aged only fifteen, whose endurance of torture drew from the governor himself expressions of admiration, and caused the judge to dismiss him under pretext of his youth. Numidicus, afterwards made a presbyter, afforded a signal example of a Christian resolution which nothing could shake. His trials had been severe. His wife had undergone martyrdom before his eyes, and he himself had been left as dead, having undergone burning, and having been buried under a heap of stones. In this state he was found by his daughter, and by her recovered for a life of future usefulness. Some dared the penalties of the law in the severest shapes it could assume, and, after being exposed to starvation and burning, showed their readiness to endure still greater torments for the sake of Christ and his gospel.

The heads of the church were especially singled out as the objects of this persecution. Fabianus, a Roman bishop, suffered for the Christian faith. Among others, Cyprian was indicated as a mark for outrage. Though at heart emulous for the crown of martyrdom, which he valued as the highest earthly distinction, he deemed it more prudent to yield to the force of the circumstances which surrounded him. He therefore left for a time the scene of his labors, and hid himself from his savage persecutors; yet he maintained an active correspondence with the presbyters of his society, and his letters and tracts furnish

the most valuable information respecting the position of the church in the third century. From them we learn that the love of wealth had already affected the Christian community. The taste for artificial distinctions had greatly prevailed over the simple tastes and habits of early Christianity. Intermarriage with unbelievers was not uncommon; quarrels one with another were by no means infrequent; the ancient duties of beneficence and almsgiving were in a great degree forgotten; and pastors were more desirous of gain than careful respecting the spiritual welfare of their flocks. The crowd of those who, terrified at their impending dangers, wished to renounce Christianity, was so great, that in some instances the magistrates desired to defer receiving the abjuration of many of them till the next day, but were besought by the trembling Christians to be recorded as heathens that very night. But all were not thus recreant. Whilst in his retirement, Cyprian warned those to whom he wrote against a wanton and unnecessary provocation of the anti-Christian persecutors. He exhorted them, whilst they visited their imprisoned brethren, not to do so in crowds; to take in rotation the duty of administering to the necessities of the captives, and to cultivate humble and peaceful lives amidst the trials to which they were so unrighteously exposed.

The persecution of Decius, so far from exhausting itself by its first impulse, became after its commencement even more severe. The cowardice of many Christians led the attacking powers to believe that an increased vigor of action might succeed in beating down the remaining obstinacy, as they chose to believe it, of the Christian professors. But the most cruel enemies of religion have their moments of satiety; and the attention of Decius was speedily called away from the Christians to matters which he properly regarded of greater moment — certainly to those in which the existence of his empire was more immediately involved. The Goths made an irruption into the empire; Decius marched against them; and after a battle, in which he was triumphant, lost his own life.

During the continuance of these persecuting outrages, which kept Cyprian in retirement, rather from the wishes of others than from his own, the party who had opposed his election to the bishopric availed themselves of his absence to stir up a spirit of disaffection against him and his ministry. The declining religion of the church has already been stated. The number of the lapsed was extremely great. But many of these repented of their grievous sin when they found themselves excluded from communion, and a question thereon arose, whether such repentant backsliders should be restored, whether they should remain in a state of seclusion, or whether they should be admitted to a protracted, but not hopeless, probation. These questions were deeply interesting to the whole Christian community, as well as to the fallen themselves; and in the state of knowledge then existing they were found extremely difficult to answer. It was the age in which the church had begun to depend on traditional precedents, and in this case there were no precedents. The difficulty was also greatly increased by the enemies of Cyprian, who stirred up the strife by inflaming the minds of the lapsed themselves. The bishop, moved on the one hand by pity for the fallen, yet fully alive on the other to the honor of the religion which these men had outraged by their sad defection, wished the question to remain open till the return of tranquillity should render a convention on the subject possible. This intermediate course little satisfied some of the backsliders themselves, instigated by Cyprian's rivals. Their party was, however, still more powerfully strengthened from another quarter. Some of those who had demonstrated their faith in the Lord Jesus by suffering for his name had expressed their pity for the condition of their brethren, who had not at first displayed equal courage, but who had repented of their sin; and their opinion was held at that time as an utterance scarcely less than divine. Several of these lapsed persons received on this authority the Lord's Supper at the hands of certain presbyters of Carthage, without any publication of their

repentance, or consultation of Cyprian; and Felicissimus was ordained as deacon without his knowledge. In fact, Cyprian was claiming new powers, which the turbulent spirit of the five presbyters was unwilling to allow. The conflict became severe. It was not unusual for the martyrs, in departing to die, to give to the lapsed penitents a paper containing the following formula: — Let ———, together with his, be received into the communion of the Church." So vague and indiscriminate a recommendation opened, of course, the door to all kinds of irregularity. The situation of Cyprian was difficult; it was a case in which his position could only be maintained by defying present unpopularity. But the Bishop of Carthage was not wanting in the firmness necessary to his situation. He opposed the undue reverence which was attached to the behests of martyrs, declaring that true martyrdom consisted not in single and insulated acts, but in the whole conduct consecrated to Christ and his service. In a certain case, where one confessor on behalf of another gave the valedictory absolution to one of the fallen brethren, as well as the libel (certificate) of peace, Cyprian boldly withstood the claim, declaring, with high Christian spirit, that the martyrs do not make the gospel, but the gospel the martyrs. Yet, however resolute the bishop might be in opposing popular opinion on this one point, he made some concessions to it in another, admitting, in case any of the lapsed were about to die, the validity of the certificates he in the other case denied. These contradictory proceedings had, however, a common point of harmony; for in granting the latter indulgence the bishop was much influenced by the determination of the Romish Church to grant such favors in case of mortal sickness. Cyprian was always true to his episcopal order.

When the persecution of Decius began a little to abate, Cyprian prepared himself to return to his beloved church. Yet before he committed himself to so decided an act, he sent a deputation, consisting of two bishops and two presbyters, to visit the united body. The office assigned to them was to re-

lieve the infirm and necessitous poor, and to point out especially, for the information of Cyprian, those who had been eminent for their meekness and devotedness during the late persecutions, in order that he might place them in appropriate offices in the church. Such an act of episcopal authority met with strenuous opposition. Whether it were that the protesting party considered such conduct as an infraction of the rights of the deacons and presbyters in general, or whether it were that they were resolved to humble Cyprian in the eyes of the community, they met his proposition with direct resistance. Amongst these opposers the deacon Felicissimus, who had been from the first adverse to Cyprian's election, was distinguished. Nor was such an opposition unnatural, inasmuch as Cyprian, a newly-made bishop, was performing by his episcopal authority the very services which the deacon's office had been instituted to embrace.

In this crisis, therefore, Felicissimus used his utmost influence to oppose and to abridge the priestly power which Cyprian was intent on exercising. And, as he had been appointed deacon by the presbyter Novatus, who was pastor of a community in the neighborhood of Carthage, and as he and his presbyter had a fiery spirit of liberty within them (Cyprian called Novatus a firebrand), Felicissimus declared to the poor of his own church that, if they gave evidence before the deputation whom Cyprian had sent to Carthage, they should be at once excluded from communion. This suburban church became at the same time the rallying-point for all those backsliders who wished to be received into immediate fellowship. In the persons of the disaffected the church was in fact fighting its last battle for liberty; a contest in which, as it often happens, men of acerb tempers and violent passions gain for a time a certain predominance, and excite not a little scandal, but in which, nevertheless, the most solemn interests of truth and piety are often embarked. The contest was now with the modern demands of a self-constituted prelacy.

The existence of this disaffection induced Cyprian to delay

his return to the church until the time arrived for the annual synod of the North African bishops; for at this period synods were beginning to be assemblies of regular recurrence, and Cyprian well knew their value as helps to his hierarchical pretensions. The decisions of this synod Cyprian felt would give authority to his position, and tend to the settlement of the perplexed questions. This assembly concurred in general in the bishop's decisions. It determined that in cases of death the former arrangement should stand good, but that when no such crisis was imminent the communion should only be granted to such as had given evidence of true penitence. It moreover pronounced decisively against the claims of the disaffected party.

But these conclusions were not acquiesced in without a struggle. Several disorderly persons united with the dissentients, and among the rest some African bishops, who had been deposed for their immoral conduct. They proceeded to the election of a bishop of their own choice (for as yet the election of bishops remained with the people); and commissioned a deputation to represent to the church of Rome the complaints they had to prefer against Cyprian. The latter at the same time addressed a letter on his own part, in which he besought the Bishop of Rome not to allow the disaffected to disturb the unity of the church.

At this crisis, Novatus, the deputy of the disaffected party, journeyed from Carthage to Rome, where he associated himself with Novatian, a learned presbyter of the church in that city. This eminent man, whose treatise on the doctrine of the Trinity is one of the best productions of antiquity, had insisted upon the absolute rejection of the lapsed, and had maintained these opinions in opposition to Cornelius, then the Roman bishop. In consequence of these views, which had been endorsed by a council of sixty bishops at Rome, Novatian renounced the communion of the church, and was himself consecrated a prelate of Rome by two or three Italian bishops. But this act appears to have been one which he rather yielded to than promoted.

The chief actor was probably Novatus, who, though he had now veered round to the opposite point of the compass from that he formerly occupied with regard to the treatment of the lapsed, and contended by the side of Novatian for the very asceticism which he had decried in Cyprian, was true at least to one position — that of antagonism to the ruling powers.

The contest which now began was severe and acrimonious. Each party not only censured the other, but each ascribed to the opposite the most ignominious motives. The larger churches of Christians, at Antioch, Alexandria and Carthage, were appealed to in the dispute. Cyprian (as inconsistent as Novatus, though for an opposite reason), whose previous views might have led Novatian to hope that he would embrace his cause, turned against him, and expressed his detestation of those who would oppose the authority and divide the unity of the church. In this dispute the true merits of the case were almost altogether lost. The question agitated was not whether the all-powerful merits of Christ could cover the guilt of those who had apostatized from their Christian profession; but whether there were authority for believing that such as had broken their baptismal vow by open and mortal sin could be reädmitted into the bosom of the church without vitiating the purity of its communion. Starting from this point, the Novatians called themselves the Cathari (οἱ καθαροί), "the Pure."

In the progress of this controversy, which touched more the discipline than the doctrine of the church, the party of Novatian found itself unable to grapple with the powerful influences brought to bear on the contrary side. Many of his adherents returned to the communion of the church at Rome. The subsequent career of Novatian is unknown; but he is believed to have died, under Valerian, a martyr to the Christian faith. His followers held only a modified form of the doctrine of their master, denying absolution to great offenders.

Were we better acquainted with the history of Novatianism than through the medium of its bitter hierarchical opponents, it

is not improbable that we might discover in this controversy many points to enlist our feelings on the side of the separatists. It would appear that the question of purity of communion was much agitated in the controversy; the Novatians contending for the removal from the church of those who had proved themselves unworthy members of its communion, though maintaining their views with a severity and asperity which laid them open to much censure.

Under Gallus, the successor of Decius, the Christians were allowed a momentary interval of peace; and Cyprian availed himself of the pause to write to the refractory members of the church of Rome, through Cornelius, the bishop. In this letter the Carthagenian avows views not wholly different from those of Callistus, with regard to indiscriminate communion:

"Though there appear to be tares in the church, our faith and love ought not to be hindered by beholding them so as to cause us to desert our post. Our business is to labor, that we ourselves may stand a scrutiny; that, when the wheat shall be gathered into the harvest, we may receive reward according to our labor. The apostle speaks of vessels not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honor and some to dishonor." Not thus did the apostle Paul write to the Corinthians, when he described to them the care which should be taken by a bishop in laying the materials of the church.

The quiet which had attended the early government of Gallus was speedily interrupted by a disastrous occurrence. A pestilence of unusual malignity, which had begun its ravages during the last reign, had now extended over the whole Roman empire, and was spreading the most extensive desolation in all quarters. Tertullian had said, as we have already seen, that whatever calamities befell the Roman people prompted instantly the cry, "Throw the Christians to the lions;" and the present calamity again verified its truth. At this time, a decree of the emperor commanded all Roman subjects to offer public sacrifice to the heathen gods, as a means of averting the wrath of heaven.

Great numbers absented themselves: for the prestige of paganism was now rapidly giving way. So remarkable a fact, however, instigated a persecution of some severity, though apparently unauthorized by any imperial rescript.

In this crisis, Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, was banished from his charge to Civitá Vecchia, which gave occasion to Cyprian to write to him a congratulatory letter on the event. Cornelius died in banishment, or, as some have related, suffered martyrdom. Cyprian speaks of him as a "wise and virtuous bishop;" though neither the fragments preserved of him nor the testimony of his adversaries confirm the favorable verdict.

The Roman Catholic doctrine is, that the persecution of Decius was permitted by God to demonstrate that Cornelius was a true successor of the apostles, and that Novatian was only an anti-pope. But the papal power was not, even yet, sufficiently confirmed to obtain such a distinction, even were its claims to apostolicity founded on truth. Its disastrous star was, however, rapidly culminating in the ecclesiastical horizon. The next Bishop of Rome, Lucius, elected to fill the vacant seat of Cornelius, was exiled by Gallus immediately after his election.

Among other parts of the Roman empire, Carthage was peculiarly affected by the visitation of the pestilence to which we have already referred. Pontius* describes its ravages as terrible, and the number of its victims as immense. A panic seized the inhabitants, who fled from the city in all directions, abandoning the dying and the dead. The streets were crowded with the skeletons of miserable beings thrown out of their houses by the terrified inhabitants, who vainly asked for assistance of the passers by. Cyprian describes the symptoms of the disorder with the particularity of a physician. "These cruel inflammations of the throat which distress us — these frequent vomitings — these eyes glittering and full of fire — these corrupt limbs which must be amputated — the cold venom of disease

* Cypriani Vita.

which destroys the use of our legs, our ears, and our eyes — all this only serves to exercise our faith. How great the courage necessary to sustain without shrinking such violent attacks of disease and death! What greatness of soul in remaining unmoved in the midst of the ruins of the human race!"

According to their usual custom on such occasions, the multitude called for the death of Cyprian. But the demand was but a momentary impulse, and seems to have been attended by no very imminent danger. With a magnanimity which does him the highest honor, the bishop, unmindful of such animosity, resolved to demonstrate the superiority of the religion of the gospel in such a crisis. He called his people together, and represented to them that their religion required that they should not only give aid to one another under so fearful a visitation, but should imitate Him who causes "his rain to descend and his sun to shine on the evil and the good, on the just and on the unjust." Touched by his sincerity and his eloquence, the flock responded warmly to the appeal of their bishop. The church was organized for this benevolent undertaking. Some offered their money; some, with greater self-sacrifice, their personal service. Although the richer part of the pagan population had fled from the city, the benevolence of the church at Carthage was a full compensation for their loss. At the same time Cyprian drew up a tract to instruct and encourage his people, and taught them that they should rather rejoice than grieve at this calamity, inasmuch as it was a means of delivering them from the cruelty of their persecutors, and leaving them to a death which would be quick and quiet. He reminded them, at the same time, that God was, on this occasion, trying the virtues of each, and purifying that which in them was spiritual from the taints which might disfigure it. We dwell with pleasure on this incident, so honorable to the piety of the third century, and so creditable to the zeal and enlarged benevolence of the bishop himself. Enough of Christianity yet remained to win the admiration of enemies, and to put heathenism to shame.

Cyprian's views with regard to such calamities had, however, something in them peculiar to himself. In his judgment the world was near its close — the worn-out wheels of nature no longer performed their usual functions, and whatever calamities befell the heathen were only a fraction of what they had deserved.* A letter of his, written to the church of Thibaritans in Africa, exhibits the uneasy posture of the period:

"Let no one be disturbed, most beloved brethren, when he sees our people put to flight and scattered through fear of persecution, that he does not behold the collected brotherhood nor hear the preaching of the bishops. All cannot then meet together, since it is not lawful for us to kill, but we are in constant danger of being killed. Wherever in these days any one of the brethren shall be separated from the church in body, though not in spirit, let him not be moved by the horror of such a flight; nor, if he shall be compelled to withdraw and hide himself, be terrified by the solitude of the desert. For he is not alone who has Christ as the companion of his flight; he is not alone who, preserving the temple of God, wherever he may be, has the presence of God. And if a robber shall assault such a fugitive in his solitude and his mountains, if a wild beast shall attack him, if hunger, thirst, or cold shall afflict him, or tempests and storms shall drown him as he hastens his flight across the sea, Christ beholds him as his soldier everywhere fighting for his cause, and will give him the reward of suffering undertaken for his own name's sake, as he has promised, in the resurrection."

In the year 252 a council was held at Carthage, composed of sixty-six bishops. Its object was to settle several matters in dispute within the church. Two points especially seem to have engaged their attention; one was the readmission into the church of a deposed presbyter by his bishop, The[illegible] at a mere point of consent of the people themselves. This[illegible]ion which exploded with of prerogative, though one perfectly [illegible]

[illegible]ns, a new source of trouble,

* Ad Demet[illegible]esent, placed these internal dis-

ter of the times. The council, through Cyprian, determined the act to be undesirable and reprehensible, yet it confirmed the decision of the bishop. The other question related to infant baptism, and to the inquiry whether the time prescribed by the ancient law of circumcision should be adhered to in its administration to infants. The council unanimously determined that baptism immediately after birth was lawful.

Among other matters which claimed and received the notice of Cyprian, as bishop of the church at Carthage, was this — whether an actor continuing his theatrical occupation should be permitted to enjoy Christian communion. To this interrogation Cyprian replied most decidedly in the negative, and, in the course of his letter, thus expresses himself: "If he shall make poverty or necessity a plea, he can be placed among those who are sustained by the gifts of the church — if only he shall be content with frugal food, and do not think that he is redeemed by a salary to cease from sin, inasmuch as this does not concern us as much as himself. But, whatever his gains may be from that quarter, what kind of gain is that which snatches men from the banquet of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and miserably and destructively leads them from feasting in this world to the eternal punishments of hunger and thirst? Therefore, as far as you are able, recall him from this depravity and disgrace to the hope of life eternal, that he may be content with the aids of the church, which, though they may be sparing, will be safe. But if the church there" (that is, at Thenæ, near Carthage) "is not able to afford nourishment to its poor, he can transfer himself to us, and here he can receive whatever may be necessary for his [illegible] and clothing; but he must not teach those who are without [illegible]ying that [illegible] mortal errors, but must learn within the church night disfigure [illegible] to salvation."*

[illegible] so honorable to the pr[illegible] was short; and his death, which took [illegible] to the zeal and enlarge[illegible]ored peace to the Christians over the [illegible] Enough of Christianity yet [illegible] enemies, and to put heathen

* Euchratio fratri.

Roman empire. He was succeeded by Valerian, chosen as emperor by the senate (in opposition to Æmilian, who contested for a brief time that honor, but was slain by his own soldiers). This aged man (he was nearly seventy years old) began his imperial course by a careless toleration of Christianity, and the church enjoyed four years of comparative repose. It was, however, by no means free from internal discords.

About the year 255, an important question arose, which greatly agitated the Christian community, and excited the most angry feelings among the churches. It was, whether those who had been baptized by heretics and schismatics should be re-baptized on their return to the orthodox church. Cyprian, ever intent upon the maintenance of ecclesiastical authority, declared that Novatian's and other heretical baptism was null and void; whilst Stephen, who was then the Bishop of Rome, contended that nothing more was necessary for their reception than the imposition of hands. The contest grew severe and exceedingly inflamed. A council held at Carthage sustained the views of Cyprian; whilst Stephen, on the ground of tradition, fulminated excommunication on the whole body, refused to receive their deputation, stigmatized Cyprian as Antichrist, and declared that his adherents ought to be refused the rites even of hospitality. As the churches in the East agreed to the opinions of Cyprian, and had indeed first raised the question, Stephen included them in the same condemnation. The ground of argument taken by Firmilian and others was, that as the gifts of God were widely distributed, no absolute rule could be laid down applicable to all occasions. Cyprian himself was compelled to oppose argument to tradition. So far, indeed, were his previous ecclesiastical assumptions from securing the unity of the church for which he had so strenuously contended, that a mere point of discipline proved an element of combustion which exploded with disastrous effect.

In the midst of these contentions, a new source of trouble, however, arose, which, for the present, placed these internal dis-

sensions in abeyance. Valerian, whose kindness to the Christian body had been remarkable and unusual, now, prompted by Macrianus, a favorite addicted to the practice of magic, revived the persecution, which continued till his death. It was his first object to prevent the progress of Christianity without bloodshed; and with this view an effort was made to deprive Christian churches of their leaders, especially of their bishops. In compliance with this desire, Cyprian was cited before the tribunal of the proconsul, Paternus. When he had presented himself, he was thus addressed:

*Proc.* The most holy emperors, Valerian and Gallienus, have commanded, by letters which they have deigned to write to me, that all those who do not make profession of the Roman religion shall be constrained to conform to it. I have learned that you are one of that number. What is your reply?

*Cyp.* I am a Christian and a bishop. I know no other gods than the only true God, who has created the heaven, the earth, and the sea, and all that are in them. This is the God whom we Christians adore; to him we pray day and night, for ourselves for all men, and for the welfare of the emperors themselves.

*Proc.* Do you persist, then, in this resolution?

*Cyp.* A good resolution, grounded on the knowledge of God, cannot be changed.

*Proc.* You must then go to the city of Curubis, according to the commandment of Valerian and Gallienus. (This was a sentence of banishment.)

*Cyp.* I go.

*Proc.* The emperors have not only written respecting bishops, but presbyters. I desire you to tell me who are the presbyters who dwell in this city.

*Cyp.* Your laws prohibit the laying of informations. I therefore cannot tell you who they are; but in the places where they preside you will be able to find them.

*Proc.* We are concerned at present only with this place. To-day our investigation is limited to the present place.

*Cyp.* As our doctrine forbids a man to give himself up, and as it is likewise contrary to your own rules, *they* cannot give themselves up; but, if you seek for them, you will find them.

*Proc.* Yes, I will find them. (Then he added) I have an order also from the same emperors to prevent assemblies being held in cemeteries and elsewhere.* The first who shall break this rule shall be punished with death.

*Cyp.* Execute your orders.

The Bishop of Carthage was accordingly sent by Paternus, who seems to have avoided undue harshness in his treatment of him, to Curubis, a small town on the shores of the Mediterranean. During eleven months he was kept in confinement, not being subject to severity, but being allowed to occupy private lodgings. The inhabitants of Curubis treated him with great kindness. During this exile, the proconsul died.

The favorable regard, however, which Cyprian received, was not extended to his fellow-laborers. The heathens seized nine bishops, with several priests and deacons, and even girls and children, beat them, and sent them to labor in the copper-mines of the neighboring mountains. In a sympathizing letter addressed to them, Cyprian thus consoles them in his own characteristic style:

"It is not to be lamented that you have been beaten with clubs, and have been thus introduced by this punishment into the Christian profession. The body of a Christian trembles not on account of clubs, for all his hope is in *wood*. The servant of Christ acknowledges *wood* as the sacrament of salvation. He is redeemed by *wood* to eternal life; he is carried by *wood* to a crown. What wonder is it that, being as you are vessels

* This refers to the practice of the early Christians of holding their meetings at the tombs of their martyrs. The custom was derived not only from the impulse which such scenes gave to their ardor and courage, but also from the concealment thereby secured.

of gold and silver, you have been sent to the mines, that is, to the home of gold and silver? . . . Your persecutors have loaded your feet with chains, and have bound the holy members and temples of God with infamous fetters, as if the spirit could be bound with the body, or your gold could be soiled by contact with iron. O feet, happily shackled with fetters which do not cease to march in the way to Paradise! O feet, confined in the present world, that they may be always free to God! O feet, bound for a little time with fetters, but which will soon run lightly in the glorious road that leads to Jesus Christ! Your body, weary with labors, lies on the ground; but it is no punishment to lie with Christ. Your limbs are deformed by dirt and filth, and ye are without baths; but you are internally washed, though you are outwardly filthy. You have little bread; but man lives not in bread alone, but in the word of Christ. You have no clothes to keep you from cold; but he who puts on Christ is clothed abundantly. The hair of your half-shaven head is in disorder; but since Jesus Christ is the head of the man, all becomes the head which the confession of His name has made illustrious. With what splendor will not all this dishonor, so horrible in the eyes of pagans, be recompensed! This is a light and brief passage, which will soon be changed into immortal glory, when, according to the word of the apostle, the Lord shall change this body of humiliation, that he may conform it to the body of his brightness."*

To other imprisoned confessors of Christ Cyprian writes in similar terms of Christian consolation. If the African taste of these compositions appear to the modern reader somewhat questionable, the piety which they breathe will command his admiration.

Cyprian was permitted to return to Carthage in the year 257. Such a mode of proceeding against the Christians as that adopted by Valerian was evidently worse than futile. It had

* Epist. lxxvi.

stirred up the churches by appealing to their sympathies on behalf of their exiled pastors; and, in many cases, the exiles had gathered around them small congregations, to whom they had expounded a gospel hitherto unknown. Witness the testimony of Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, who, having been banished to Lybia, declares that by means of the deported Christians the ignorant heathen had been led to abandon their idols, and to worship the true God. In enumerating the victims of this persecution, the same author states, "You must know that there are" (among the martyrs) "men and women, old and young, young virgins and aged matrons, soldiers and private men, every class and every age, some that obtained the crown of victory under stripes and in the flames, some by the edge of the sword."* This shows that, however bloodless might be the first proceedings of Valerian, the persecution soon gathered greater severity. A new imperial decree, issued in 258, assigned the punishment of death to Christian bishops, presbyters, and deacons; deprivation of rank to senators and nobles; banishment to women of high station, and hard labor in chains to those who were in the service of the palace. Such a decree speaks volumes respecting the rapid progress made by Christianity, even among the higher orders of the community.

The first victims of this new rescript were the Roman bishop Sixtus, and four deacons of his church. The fury of the storm soon reached Cyprian.

On his return to Carthage, Cyprian had occupied a retired house in the neighborhood of the city, in daily expectation of being summoned to the heathen tribunal. The new proconsul, Galerius Maximus, was at this time residing at Utica. Cyprian heard that his guards had been sent to apprehend him; but though he ardently longed for the crown of martyrdom, he desired to address his last counsels to his flock, and therefore

* Euseb. l.

yielded to the advice of his friends, and hid himself for a time till the proconsul should return to Carthage. His wish was to utter his dying counsels in the presence of his own people. As soon as Galerius Maximus reappeared at Carthage, Cyprian returned to his residence. He was immediately seized and carried before the proconsul to his villa at Sextus, six miles from Carthage. Thence he was taken back to the residence of the captain of the guard in the environs of Carthage, being remanded till the next day. In the mean time the news of his capture spread through the city, and greatly agitated the whole community. The people ran to the spot where Cyprian was a prisoner, from all quarters. Cyprian passed the night at the house of the captain of the guard; but the people, who were fearful lest anything should befall the bishop in their absence, kept watch before the door. The crowd was composed of a mixed populace of both sexes, and Cyprian, looking out on them, requested that special regard should be paid to those young females whom regard for himself had thus drawn, amongst others, around him.

On the morning of the next day the bishop of the church of Carthage, attended by a large crowd, walked to the prætorium to appear before the proconsul. He went, says Pontius, "like a general of the army of God and of Jesus Christ, attended by an immense number of the faithful, who were united in soul to him, as if that they might together achieve an illustrious victory over death." As the proconsul had not yet arrived, he sat down, fatigued and heated by his walk in the midst of such a concourse. One of the soldiers offered him a change of linen. But Cyprian refused, saying, "Do you wish to relieve an inconvenience which I shall not suffer beyond to-day?"

The proconsul having now arrived, Cyprian was brought before him, when the following conversation ensued:

*Proc.* Art thou Thascius Cyprian?

*Cyp.* I am he.

*Proc.* Thou art, then, the bishop of this impious sect?

*Cyp.* I am.

*Proc.* The most holy emperors command thee to worship the gods.

*Cyp.* That I may not do.

*Proc.* Consider what thou dost.

*Cyp.* Do thy duty. I have no need to deliberate upon so clear a matter.

*Proc.* Thou wouldst do better to consult thy safety, and not to despise the gods.

*Cyp.* My safety and strength is Christ the Lord, whom I desire to serve forever.

*Proc.* I pity thy case, and could wish thee to deliberate.

*Cyp.* I have no desire but to worship God, and to hasten to him with all the ardor of my soul; for the afflictions of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

The proconsul, who was at this time in a state of great illness, pronounced these words:

"Thou hast lived for a long time in impiety. Thou hast associated with a body of abandoned men, declared enemies of the gods and the laws; thou hast never yielded to the religion of the most pious and holy emperors. Thou hast been convicted of being the chief and leader of this criminal sect, and thou shalt serve as an example to those whom thy crime has associated with thee; and thou shalt seal thy doctrine with thy blood."

He then read his sentence:

"I order that Thascius Cyprian shall be beheaded."

*Cyp.* God be praised!

Cyprian was led away, the multitude crying, as they accompanied him, "Let us be beheaded with him!"

On issuing from the house of the proconsul, the bishop was encircled by a band of soldiers, and thus led to the place of execution. It was a plain bordered with trees; these trees

were crowded with spectators, who could not otherwise behold the spectacle. Cyprian was divested of his mantle, and then, falling on his knees, addressed himself to God in prayer. Then, having pulled off his robe, which he gave to his deacons, he prepared himself for death. He ordered a large sum of money to be given to the executioner. His friends threw down linen and handkerchiefs before him to catch the blood, which they regarded as sacred. He bound his own eyes, and then endeavored to unloose the collar of his inner garment; but, being unable to do it, the presbyter Julian, and another Julian, a subdeacon, unloosed it for him. He begged the executioner to hasten his process; but the man's hands trembled till the last moment, when, making a sudden effort, he struck off the bishop's head, on the 14th of September, A. D. 258.

Thus died, in the faith and hope of the gospel, a man who, whatever the differences of opinion which may exist respecting certain parts of his career, has an unquestionable claim to be ranked among the most distinguished ornaments of ecclesiastical biography. His piety was unquestionable; his abilities, remarkable; his eloquence, though turgid, and formed after the model of Tertullian, whom he called his "master," fascinating and powerful; his energy, irrepressible; his courage, undaunted, and in some respects heroic. Though a new man (for the period from his conversion to his death only fills a space of thirteen years), his unyielding conscientiousness gave him rapidly influence and power, and drew, by the magnetic attraction of such characters as his, others within his sway, whilst his clear insight into human nature gave him facility in wielding the authority he had won. In an important respect he was one of the greatest enemies of primitive Christianity. When bad men become tyrants they usually provoke a reäction which ultimately undoes the despotism. It is goodness which not only makes the chains graceful, but enduring as well as ornamental. Allied to Cyprian's excellences were great and glaring faults. Though clement and pitiful to the fallen, his opponents

found him unrelenting and severe. Generous and noble, he was yet self-complacent, dictatorial, and sometimes arrogant. No one ever used his personal popularity more to extend the authority of his order, and to advance the cause of prelacy.

The really Christian views which Cyprian held were disfigured by more errors — and serious errors too — than would be easily conjectured from the laudatory language of his admirers. The doctrine of baptismal regeneration was held by Cyprian in a similar manner to that avowed by Tertullian. Cyprian, moreover, regarded every man as possessed, in his unregenerated state, by an evil spirit, which nothing but the water of baptism could expel. *That* baptism was, in his view, the entrance to eternal life; and children who died without it, in his opinion, perished in the guilt of original sin. The commemoration of the dead, though not yet perhaps assuming the form of praying for the departed, is mentioned by Cyprian in a manner which shows that he adopted the germ of that grievous error; for he speaks of making mention of the dead at the altar, celebrating a sacrifice for his repose, and naming the departed in the prayer of the priest.* His views also of celibacy, especially that of women, were worthy of the Oxford Tracts themselves, though his letters paint the working of the system in colors so glaring as to disgust the Christian, rather than to invite him to the practice. Cyprian's notions of alms-giving are thus expressed in his treatise on that subject: "Alms-giving, my brothers, is a thing most excellent and divine. It is the consolation of believers, the pledge of our salvation, the foundation of our hope, the buckler of our faith, the remedy for our sins; it is at once a great thing and an easy thing; . . . useful to all Christians to obtain the grace of heaven, to make God himself our debtor."† The Romanists have claimed St. Cyprian as avowing his belief in the intercession of the saints, because he speaks of asking God, and Christ, and angels, to be

* Cypriani Epistolæ, lxv.

† De Eleemosynis.

propitious to human actions; and the passage, certainly, is not reconcilable with any clear view of apostolical Christianity, though, perhaps, not warranting the whole Romish inference. The Bishop of Carthage quotes the Apocrypha without distinguishing it from the inspired Scriptures. Though by no means of an enthusiastic and excited temperament, he fostered much superstition. He mentions more than once remarkable and incredible visions which he had seen, dictating the course he was to pursue; and, in his treatises against Demetrian, speaks of the confessions and tortured exclamations which the demons made when under the influence of Christian exorcism. Cyprian's times have been evidently those which the Tractarians have made their stand-point. It will be a fatal blow to the church if the personal goodness of the Bishop of Carthage shall be accepted as an excuse for his unscriptural and dangerous errors.

A few indications of the practices of the church at this period may form an appropriate adjunct to this chapter.

It is evident that the purity of the Christian faith was grievously degenerated from gospel-times. Of this fact, the practices of those who had dedicated themselves to celibacy — practices which Cyprian so sternly condemns, though he applauded the institution itself — are no small proofs. The time had also passed when, in the cause of Christ, the tortures and the sword of the heathen magistrates had no terrors. The large number of the lapsed testify that the present world had become exceedingly attractive, and the glories of a world to come had lost much of their power. Yet still many true believers remained; and the distinction between the followers of Jesus and the pagans around them often excited the wonder, and sometimes the praise, of an ignorant and unenlightened age. We have seen the exertions made by Cyprian to alleviate the woes of the Carthaginians in a time of general pestilence. Nor was this the only instance of the liberality of himself and his church; for when certain Christians were seized and carried captive by

the Numidians, Cyprian urged his people, by all the arguments derived from their religious profession, by the sympathy which bound together the members of a common spiritual family, by the consideration that every Christian was a temple of God, and by the powerful argument that Christ had died to ransom them from their sins, to come to the rescue of the afflicted; and no less than a hundred thousand sesterces (nearly one thousand pounds) were raised to deliver them from their captivity. Nor were there wanting many proofs that Christianity was yet a powerful instrument of good: there was no lack of faithfulness in declaiming against the luxuries of dress and manners of living which had begun to creep into the church; the rites of private prayer, and the cultivation thereby of devout religion, were much insisted on; and the practical duties of Christianity exhibited in all their grandeur and importance. But, though Christianity had not as yet become a matter of national profession, there were — as there always are — sufficient worldly inducements (real or imaginary) to produce defection and to suggest hypocrisy, and we have already seen the infection of a corrupt system extending even to the higher ecclesiastics themselves. To counteract such tendencies was the sincere aim of many who occupied conspicuous positions in the church; but, as the vitality of religion became less, the prescriptions of external safeguards became more, and ascetic practices daily multiplied. To insist on observances, — to enforce the "touch not, taste not, handle not," — has always been an accompaniment of a declining religion. Of such institutions the days of Tertullian and Cyprian were prolific, though a subsequent age greatly increased and multiplied them; but, as yet, though asceticism abounded, monkery did not, nor was its practice earlier than the beginning of the reign of Constantine. Not yet did men separate themselves from common intercourse, or constitute themselves distinct societies; but the use of the philosophical cloak, various forms of practised abstinence, avoidance of marriage, or the employment of its advantages under severe restrictions, strongly

marked the period. In these cases a distinction seems to have been made between the *jussa* and the *suasa*, — between things *commanded* and things *recommended*, — though the force of the latter was regarded as almost equal to that of the former. Tertullian marks three degrees of holiness: the first existing in those who have been chaste from birth; the second, in those who have been chaste from their baptism; the third, in those who, their wives having died, have not again married. His opinion was, that as the Christian religion had taken away the liberty of divorce which Moses had allowed, so the administration of the Spirit, in later times, had taken away the liberty of a second marriage, which Paul had permitted.*

Public worship was insisted on as an important element of the Christian profession; and though magnificent temples had not as yet begun to arise, suitable buildings appear to have been furnished for the larger churches.† These buildings were, perhaps, approximations to those which distinguished a somewhat later age, having the communion-table (already called an altar) between the apse and the nave of the edifice, with an elevated desk for the reader and the preacher. Images in churches were as yet unknown, though symbolical representations were beginning to find their way into more private use. The sign of the cross was plentifully employed in these acts of worship. Tertullian mentions it frequently; and by the fourth century it had become an indispensable mark of Christianity. Before that time, however, it was used on every journey, on entering the house and departing from it, before washing, eating, clothing, and sitting down.‡ The first day of the week was observed universally in the place of the Jewish sabbath,

* Kaye's "Tertullian," p. 375.

† The word "church" was, up to this time, employed to indicate the worshipping body, not the place in which they worshipped. Cyprian uses the term not merely, as was customary, to designate a particular society, but to express the whole body of Christians in Africa and Numidia.

‡ Tertullian de Coron. mil 3, 4.

though the term Sabbath indicates the seventh, not the first day of the week, and Wednesday and Friday were commonly regarded by the Christians as days consecrated to fasting and prayer. Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Lent, Pentecost, were in varying degrees observed. It was forbidden to fast on Sunday. The sermons of this period were rather extemporaneous observations on the passages of scripture which had been read, than set and formal orations. The faces of the worshippers were ordinarily turned towards the east, as we learn from Justin, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen and Basil, and as we have already seen in a passage quoted from Tertullian. Somewhat later, Athanasius advocates this practice on three grounds: First, that it became Christians to worship toward the place where Christ's feet had stood (Zechariah xiv.); secondly, because God is light, and the sun rises in the east; thirdly, because Paradise was planted in the east. This practice gave rise to the heathen belief that Christians worshipped the sun.

In the time of Cyprian forms of prayer had not been introduced, though we have traces of them at a period not very long after. Cyprian and Origen both wrote treatises on the Lord's Prayer, yet without furnishing any direct evidence of the use of a liturgy, or even of the employment of the Lord's Prayer as a necessary part of public worship.* The manner in which Tertullian speaks of the performance of the public service in his day seems to indicate that there was then no precise model. He says, "after the reading of the Scriptures, psalms are sung, or addresses are made, or prayers are offered;" implying that there was no special and invariable formula. Justin Martyr, in a much disputed passage, speaks of the officiating minister as praying ὅσῃ δύναμις αὐτῷ, — words which have been interpreted by some to mean "with as loud a voice as he can," or "with all the energy he can command:" but this rendering is gratuitous; the literal meaning evidently being "to

* De Oratione Dominicâ, chap. ix.

the best of his power." Tertullian confirms this rendering by employing the phrase "ex proprio ingenio." Yet the devotions of the congregated church of Carthage appear to have been always prefaced by the admonition of the "priest,"— a term then in vogue, — "Sursam corda" (lift up your hearts); to which the people responded — "Habemus ad Dominum" (we lift them up to God).* Archbishop Whately admits that no form of prayer has come down to us from the immediate successors of the apostles; and the Chevalier Bunsen expresses himself in these words: "Some formularies may have been written down for the private use of the weak and ignorant (in the third century); but even that is doubtful. The idea of reading prayers seems to have been particularly abhorrent to the ancient church at this solemn time." In fact, liturgical worship does not appear to have been common till the fifth century.†

The third, sixth, and ninth hours were deemed peculiarly suitable for devotion.

Tertullian speaks of the attitude employed in prayer; he describes it as with eyes upraised, and hands outspread in the form of a cross: sometimes, however, the eyes were closed,‡ and the body prostrate. Men prayed with their heads uncovered; virgins were exhorted by Tertullian to be veiled. The kiss of peace was usual except on Good Friday, which was a fast.

Singing was a prominent part of worship; and the multiplied testimonies of the early writers show with what frequency it was employed by the first Christians. In his letter to Trajan, Pliny, it will be remembered, describes the practice of singing hymns to Christ as God; and the earlier psalmody of the church appears to have been uniformly in honor of Him. Among the works of Clemens of Alexandria is one of these hymns, ascribed in the volume of his treatises to Clemens himself, but supposed by many to be of considerably older origin. As this hymn has not been preserved in the devotions of Christians, because it

* Cyprian, De Oratione Dominicâ.

† Bunsen's Hippolytus, vol. ii. p. 158. ‡ Origen.

was thought to bear too close a resemblance to the heathen odes, a rough specimen of it may not be inappropriate:

O! Bridle of undisciplined foals!
O! Wing of unwandering birds!
True Rudder of infants!
Shepherd of the royal fold!
All the simple
Children do there congregate;
Worthily to praise,
Sincerely to sing,
With undefiled mouths; —
Christ the Leader of children!
King of the saints!
Word all-subduing!
Of the Most High Father's
Wisdom, the President!
Support of labors!
Duratiou-loving!
Of the human family
Jesus, the Saviour! &c.

It is probable that this hymn was intended to be sung antiphonally, though it does not appear to have been much employed. An extant hymn, sung at the lighting of candles, is also of very early origin.

HYMN AT LIGHTING.

Cheerful light of the holy glory
Of the Everlasting Father, Jesus Christ!
We arriving at the setting sun,
And beholding the evening light,
Sing hymns to the Father, and the Son,
And the Holy Spirit of God!
Worthy it is at all times
To sing in hallowed hymns.
O Son of God, Thou givest life,
Therefore the world worshippeth Thee!

The influence of these hymns, like that of those put forth by Luther and his companions at a later period, was extremely

great; and Jerome describes the ploughman singing at his plough, and the mower and vine-dresser regaling themselves by this exercise during the intervals of their busy occupations.

But the lighting hymn was private; for no candles had as yet begun to gleam in sad mockery on the altar.

Baptism was not administered until after a period of preliminary examination; and the catechumens, as those who were preparing for baptism were termed, were divided into two classes, the more advanced of which was allowed to attend the public services of the congregation. These "inquirers," as more modern language might designate them, were first brought before the teachers, who instituted the requisite investigation into their previous habits of life. If their original course had been immoral,— if they had been engaged in the fabrication of idols, or in theatrical occupations, or had been magicians,—they were required to abandon their former course. Unless in special cases, the period of probation was three years, during which time they were admitted to hear sermons, and afterwards prayed apart. Sponsors had already appeared, although the time of their origin cannot be determined. The prayers of the officiating minister were supposed in Cyprian's time to consecrate the water of baptism, which was then applied to the catechumen in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Those who desire to study the bearings of the baptismal controversy will find abundant materials in the writings of this period. Anointing, signing with the cross, and imposition of hands, accompanied the administration of this sacrament. Some extracts from the "Apostolical Constitutions" of Alexandria may not be uninteresting to the reader in illustration of this subject. It applies to adult baptism:

"And when those appointed to receive baptism have been chosen, and when their life has been investigated — if they have lived in chastity during their catechumenship; if they have honored the widow; if they have visited the sick; if they have fulfilled every good work; and if those who introduced them

have witnessed to them that they have done this, let them hear the gospel. And at the time when they shall be separated, let hands be laid upon them in that day, and let them be exorcised; and when the day approaches in which they shall be baptized, let the bishop exorcise each one of them, that he may know that they are pure. . . . Let those who shall receive baptism fast on the eve of the Sabbath. But on the Sabbath, when those who are to receive baptism have been gathered together in one place by the advice of the bishop, let them all be commanded to pray, and to kneel; and when he has laid his hand upon them, let him exorcise every strange spirit to flee from them, and not to return to them from that time. And when he has finished exorcising, let him breathe on them; and when he has sealed their foreheads and their ears, and the opening of their mouths, let him raise them up; and let some watch all the night, reading to them and exhorting them. And let those who shall receive baptism not receive anything within them, but that alone which each one shall bring in for the thanksgiving. . . . And all who are able to answer for themselves let them answer; but those who are not able to answer, let their parents answer for them, or one other numbered among their relations. . . . And at the time which is appointed for the baptism, let the bishop give thanks over the oil, which, putting into a vessel, he shall call the oil of thanksgiving. Again, he shall take other oil, and, exorcising it, he shall call it the oil of exorcism. And a deacon shall bear the oil of exorcism, and stand on the left hand of the presbyter. Another deacon shall take the oil of thanksgiving, and stand on the right hand of the presbyter. And when the presbyter has taken hold of each one of those who are about to receive baptism, let him command him to renounce, saying, 'I will renounce thee, Satan, and all thy service, and all thy works.' And when he has renounced all these, let him anoint him with the oil of exorcism, saying, 'Let every spirit depart from thee.' (After this the subject was baptized, anointed with the anointing oil, and sealed upon his forehead.)

And all those who receive baptism shall be praying. Let them say 'Peace' with their mouths." *

The Lord's Supper had now become dissociated from the ordinary meal, and formed a part of the public devotional service; the whole flock of each bishop communed, even so early as the days of Ignatius, at one common sacramental table; and the same practice remained unaltered in the time of Cyprian. The supper was called the Eucharist, from the thanksgiving-prayer which was offered before its celebration. To this prayer a peculiar value began already to be attached. Wine mixed with water was employed in this rite; † and the cups, which were sometimes of glass, often bore upon them emblematical pictures — as, for instance, a shepherd carrying a sheep upon his shoulders, which figure also frequently occurred in the Christian catacombs. The Lord's Supper was not indiscriminately administered, being reserved for those who had been baptized, and who had previously received, according to the expression of Tertullian, "pious initiation." Before the administration of this sacrament, the catechumens were removed, and the communicants presented such gifts as their means enabled them to offer. These collections were appropriated to the service of the church

* Bunsen's Hippolytus, vol. ii. p. 320.

† That Cyprian was no believer in transubstantiation may be inferred from the following passage, which refers to those who would have used water instead of wine at the Lord's Supper. "Whereas Christ has said, 'I am the true vine!' how can aught but wine be his blood? and how can the cup appear to contain blood, when destitute of that wine which throughout Scripture is the type of it?" Some of Cyprian's arguments against the use of water are extremely far-fetched. Water ought not to be used because — 1. Noah, who was a type of the future church, was drunk with wine: 2. Because Melchisedek brought forth bread and wine: 3. Because Wisdom, also a type of Christ (Prov. 9. 1—5), when she makes a representative feast, says, "Drink of the wine which I have mingled:" 4. Because of the prophecy regarding Judah (Gen. 49. 11), "he washed his garments in wine:" 5. Because of the prophecy which represents Christ as "red as with the blood of the wine-press," &c. We are afraid that those who object to the use of wine at the Lord's Supper would scarcely deem some of these arguments conclusive.

and the use of the poor. The Lord's Supper was administered in the churches at Alexandria to the worshippers standing: according to the testimony of Tertullian, it was forbidden to kneel on the Lord's day, or at any other time between Easter and Whitsuntide; inasmuch as those periods were times of rejoicing, at which a kneeling posture was deemed inappropriate. After the reception of the supper, a hymn was sung. From the table of the congregation, the bread and wine, which was often mixed with water, were carried to the diseased, the captives and the strangers. As the consecrated bread was already supposed to be possessed of a mystic virtue, it was laid up by the pious in their houses, and received as a hallowing preparation for the labors of the day. The church of Africa administered the communion to infants, who, when they could not partake of the bread, received the wine. Letters called "Pacificæ" were given to poor travellers, whereby their faith might be known, and they might be enabled to communicate with distant churches. There were also dismissory letters, without which pastors could not be honorably received.

At this period it is evident that tradition had become almost equal to an express apostolical law. "The Apostolical Constitutions" of Alexandria — which are, beyond doubt, unauthentic, though in general use in the ante-Nicene age — declare that the twelve apostles, before departing on their several ministrations, met in order to make certain necessary appointments relative to the working of the church; and that each of them delivered specific principles, among which that of Barnabas is certainly most remarkable: "Be ye lawgivers to your own selves; be ye teachers to yourselves alone, as God hath taught you."

In the public worship of the Christians of this period, the reading of the Scriptures occupied a distinguished place; and in cases where the people could not understand the language in which the version employed was written, the reader translated the passage for their benefit. The gospel was read in the

churches in a loud voice by persons specially appointed: in performing this duty, there was a difference between the practice of the African and other Latin churches. The deacons performed it in Rome; in Africa the duty was discharged by readers.

In this early Christian worship the commemoration of the martyrs occupied a very distinguished place. This is not wonderful. The glory of the religion of the gospel is the triumph it achieves over the last enemy, and the emphasis of Christ's system is exhibited in the remarkable phrase, "Who hath abolished death." It was, besides, the object of the early Christians to impress upon the minds of their persecutors that they really had no power to harm them, and that, though they destroyed the body, the soul defied their torture. These grand and impressive notions of religion became, however, liable to accretions which disfigured their proportions. The reader of early ecclesiastical history can trace continually the impression that the bodies of the martyrs were not merely fortified against pain by the superiority of mind over matter, but actually hardened by miraculous agency against its influence. If Polycarp died, a supernatural air, like the sail of a ship, sheltered him from the flames. If Perpetua was gored, she was insensible to the injuries she had received. The martyrologies of the early church (forbidden by the Quinesextan Council, A. D. 706, to be read in the churches because of their containing "false stories of martyrdom")* supply perpetual instances of this belief;

* The story of the eleven thousand virgins (which every visitor to Cologne will remember) has made the fortune of a church in that city by the exhibition of their bones. The error is said to have arisen from a misreading of VRSVLA ET XI MM. VV., the MM being taken to represent MILLIA (thousands) instead of MARTYRES (martyrs). But how this error became associated with such a heap of ossification, we are not told. The authority is, however, in all probability, quite as good for these remnants, as for the alabaster vase exhibited in the same church as having been one of the firkins used at the marriage of Cana. Make the authority of the church absolute, and the production of such memorials is extremely easy!

and, with the exception of a few martyrdoms which are told in a different manner from the rest, are unworthy of regard, — so impossible is it to disentangle the true from the false. Prudentius, a Spanish Christian poet of the fourth century, has collected together these wonders; and absolutely gloats over the recital of tortures, which, however, are in the narrative made to fall much more heavily on the accusers than the accused. Yet it might have been remembered that all which derogated from the torture of the sufferer diminished in the same proportion his Christian courage.

This disposition, however, to dwell with eagerness, and even with triumph, on the sufferings of the martyrs, directed and modified the observances in their memory. They were thought of, — not with sorrow, but with joy; as those raised above ordinary Christians — as those who by their distinguished virtue had gained the highest place in heaven. The anniversary of their death was called their birth-day (*dies natalis*). On that day multitudes gathered themselves together about the spot where their remains were interred, and cemeteries, for this reason among others, became sanctuaries. So rapidly did the abuse of this practice grow, that, in a council held at Carthage A. D. 401, it was ordered that fictitious relics should be destroyed.

The utmost reverence was shown for the smallest vestige belonging to those who had gained the crown of martyrdom, or,

One of the martyr stories of Nicephorus is the following, — it relates to the persecution of Dioclesian: A young Christian lady placed in the power of a Pagan, and seeing no way of escape, told him that she was a magician, and had found a preparation by which steel might be resisted. She offered to try it on herself, and, having anointed her neck, told the Pagan to strike as if beheading her, and he would see. He struck accordingly, and her head rolled on the floor. If this lady were a martyr, she was certainly not one for truth! Where there is no fraud, as there must have been in describing at least one of the cases above, there may be great credulity. Leipi, having found the body of a child seven years old in one of the catacombs, with the shoulder-blade, vertebræ, and ribs broken (no very strange thing after the lapse of fourteen centuries), concluded that this must of course have been a little saint scourged to death by the plumbata.

as it was often called, "the baptism of blood." "There is," said Cyprian, "this difference between the baptism by water and that by blood, that the one entitles us to the immediate remission of our sins, the other to the immediate reward of our virtues; — it is a baptism after which no sin can be committed." Was it wonderful that the church, which in the middle of the third century so expressed itself, should before the end of it arrive at the dangerous practice of martyr-worship?

These commemorations were not unfrequently attended by the "agapæ," or love-feasts, often celebrated upon the spot supposed to be consecrated by the relics of the departed. The lapidarian remains extracted from the ancient Christian catacombs of Rome establish this fact. At a later period St. Augustine refers to it, and warns those who abused the occasions by sinful revelry of the consequences of their crime: "The martyrs hear your bottles, your frying-pans, your drunken revels." The council of A. D. 706, however, disallowed the practice. The Lord's Supper was also as early as the year 270 celebrated at the martyrs' tombs. Masses for the dead soon followed!

Nor was it uncommon for Christians, when pursued by their pagan enemies, to seek a refuge from persecution in the spots rendered sacred by the bodies of their saints. Stephen, Bishop of Rome, — to whose dispute with Firmilian and Cyprian we have already had occasion to make reference, — was, during a considerable period, secreted in the catacombs at Rome. Here his clergy came to him to consult him respecting any matters of importance, whilst here he was joined by Hippolytus, a persecuted layman, and subsequently by some friends of the latter, who, coming to seek him, were converted under Stephen's addresses. They all suffered martyrdom. Stephen was killed as, after celebrating divine service below ground, he sat in his episcopal chair.

The distinction between the clergy and laity had become, at this period, very clearly marked; — Tertullian complains, with

his usual waspishness, that the heathen could not understand it.* The deacons usually ranked as part of the ecclesiastical body — the Levites of the New Testament. Their duties were — to receive the oblations of the faithful; to prepare the bread and wine for the Eucharist; to exhort persons to attend public service; to report to the bishop criminal cases, &c. They often preached by the appointment of the president. Deaconesses were sometimes the wives of deacons, and sometimes widows, specially appointed after a prescribed age. They visited the sick females, and attended on those women who were baptized.

In the days of Cyprian, Christians were making rapid advances towards a system of external ecclesiastical unity. The Jewish notions, with which the church was largely imbued, were regarded as presenting the model according to which the Christian church should be constituted. The smaller societies existing in the neighborhood of metropolitan or other large communities gradually and naturally fell under their influence; and the frequency of synods, always convened in the larger cities, gave to those more populous spots increased ecclesiastical importance. The small number of churches in the West prevented, to a considerable degree, the hierarchical tendency from developing itself so extensively as in the East. But already, though all bishops were declared to be equal in authority, Rome, Alexandria and Antioch, were regarded as posts of superior influence and power. The revenues which were collected in the larger churches were not a little instrumental in promoting the increase of this jurisdiction, inasmuch as the needy and destitute looked for assistance to the quarters where such help could be most readily rendered. The bishop, assisted by the deacons, began now to be the administrator of these funds. The church elected its bishop, though the metropolitans exercised considerable influence over the choice, and even the presbyters were approved by the

* Tertull., De Præscrip. c. xli.

collective body. About this time a number of subsidiary church-offices began to be appointed, under the names of subdiaconi, acolythi, exorcistæ, lectores, and ostiarii, which added not a little to the force of the hierarchical influence. Though Cyprian often consulted his clergy in his public movements, he did not scruple, when the necessity seemed to be pressing, to ordain, and even to excommunicate, without their concurrence. His pretensions to ecclesiastical authority were extremely great, and in some instances enormous. "To believe," says he, "that those who are consecrated are unworthy and unclean — what is it but to believe that the priests are not inaugurated of God and by God? What presumption, what arrogance, what pride, is it to call the prelates and priests to account!" Again, "The prelate exists in the church, and the church in the prelate; and, if any one be not with the prelate, he is not in the church." In a similar manner Cyprian speaks of the church as resident in the bishops and clergy, and in those who have remained firm in times of persecution.* He says, "There is but one God, one Christ, and one church, and one seat founded on the rock† by the word of Christ, and it is impossible to constitute any other altar or any other priesthood." He regards all separation from the church as destructive, and says of heretics and schismatics, that though they may die confessing the name of Christ, they will not obtain the crown of martyrdom, because they are out of the church, and separated from its charity and unity.‡ Everything, in short, was making way for the organization under which Gregory Nazianzen, A. D. 360, says, "Now I wish there had been no precedents, no priority of place, no authoritative dictatorship, that we might be distinguished by virtue alone; but now this right hand and left hand, and middle and higher and lower, —

* Cypriani Epistolæ, xxvi.

† The Romanists claim to translate the Latin word *Petram* in this passage by St. Peter, but everything shows that Cyprian could not have meant this.

‡ Epist. 3.

this going before and going in company, — have produced to us much unprofitable affliction, brought many into a snare, and thrust them out among the herd of the goats; and they, not only of the inferior order, but even of the shepherds, who, though masters in Israel, have not known these things."

# CHAPTER XIV.

## CAPPADOCIA AND GREGORY THAUMATURGUS.

The persecution of Valerian, as we have already stated, was not confined to Carthage, but extended to all parts of the Roman empire. Nowhere was it more severely felt than at Rome itself. About the time that Cyprian was put to death, Sextus the Second, like his predecessor Stephen, having taken refuge in the catacombs, was hunted out by order of Valerian and put to death, as were also four deacons of his church. One of these deacons was Lawrence, who witnessed the violence done to his bishop with much concern at his loss, and not a little envy at the honors he received by suffering for his Lord. But his own death followed in three days.

The church of Rome is reported at this time to have been extremely wealthy. Its riches, however, were not amassed for its own benefit, but distributed, as we have already seen, with superlative generosity. It appears also to have possessed rich ornaments and vessels, which were employed in the celebration of its religious services. The report of these riches had stimulated the cupidity of the pagans, and the Prefect of Rome, having sent for Lawrence, required of him to produce such hidden treasures. Lawrence asked for a little time, and promised that he would then show him the church's wealth. The prefect granted him three days. At the end of that time Lawrence said to him, "Come, behold the riches of our God; you shall see a large court full of golden vessels." Accordingly Lawrence led him to an enclosure in which he had collected together a large number of the eleemosynary dependents of the

church to which he belonged, at the same time saying to the prefect, with a pious pun, not unfamiliar to readers of ecclesiastical history, "These poor people whom you behold are the church's real treasures." The prefect was little able to understand the moral of this transaction, but was stung by the mockery which he supposed it to convey. Accordingly, full of rage, he commanded a large gridiron to be prepared, and Lawrence, bound in chains, to be extended on it over a slow fire. If the martyrology which relates these circumstances can be at all trusted (and it evidently must be received with extreme suspicion), Lawrence, whilst burning over the fire which consumed him, pointed a witticism with the self-possession of one entirely superior to pain. With a cheerful countenance, according to this recital, he said, "My body is broiled enough on one side; it is now time for it to be turned." He was turned accordingly, and the other side was similarly tormented. "Now," said the martyr again, "it is dressed enough. Serve me and eat." It is impossible to conjecture the precise amount of truth embodied in this somewhat apocryphal story.

The fortitude of Lawrence was not a solitary instance. Cyril, a mere lad, was, because of his Christianity, driven from his paternal home, and left to the possibilities of starvation, and was at length apprehended and brought before a heathen magistrate. He resisted all attempts which were made to induce him to change his faith, being equally unmoved by threats and blandishments. In vain was he led to a fire, at which it was simulated he was to suffer the last punishment. He remained unmoved. At length, however, the judge, irritated at the fortitude which he exhibited, really consigned him to death. He suffered this penalty with the utmost serenity and fortitude.

In Antioch, two citizens, who had lived in the strictest friendship with each other, had unhappily become at variance. Their names were Nicephorus and Sapricius, — the one a priest, the other a layman. Nicephorus, the layman, under the instigation of Christian tenderness, sought his friend and endeavored to

pacify him. But the effort was vain. When the season of persecution came, as common sorrows have a tendency to unite hearts together, another attempt was made with no better success. Sapricius was seized as a Christian, and condemned to die. As he was led along to the place of execution. Nicephorus made a last effort at reconciliation, but was treated, even then, with the same contempt as before. The courage of the priest, however, failed him at the last hour, and, when the executioner was about to fulfil the sentence, he cried out to him to stop, declaring that he would sacrifice to the gods. Nicephorus was deeply moved at witnessing this cowardice in his former friend. Addressing him, he said, "Lose not the crown which thou hast won by so many sufferings!" The appeal was vain; the unchristian priest valued his life above his conscience! Nicephorus then turning to the officers, thus addressed them: "I am a Christian; I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, whom this man has renounced. Let me die instead of him!" The vicarious substitution was permitted, and Sapricius was saved at the expense of him whom he had once called his friend.

Under the Valerian persecution in Egypt, Dionysius, the Bishop of Alexandria, suffered much, though he was not actually a martyr. The account of this persecution is given on his own authority. Dionysius and his presbyter Maximus, with others, when brought before the prefect, was asked, "Why cannot you worship your God, if you must worship him, without denying our gods?" As, however, Dionysius stated in reply that it was necessary for Christian worship to be directed to God, as supremely and exclusively divine, he and his party were banished into the desert, where they were followed by a considerable number who came to receive the gospel from them. The persecution in Egypt appears to have been especially severe. In Cæsarea of Palestine three martyrs were eminently distinguished, — Priscus, Malchus, and Alexander.

On the accession of Gallienus (A. D. 260), the persecution was restrained by special imperial edicts. The emperor, though

himself distinguished by no attachment for religion, promoted a toleration which marked his indifference to all truth, and Christianity was now legalized. Yet there were cases in which the evenomed bitterness of the pagans broke through the regulations which Gallienus had made for the protection of the Christians, and caused severe individual hardships. Amongst other cases may be cited that of Marinus, a soldier, residing at Cæsarea in Palestine. He was entitled by seniority to be promoted to the rank of centurion, but just as he was on the point of obtaining this distinction, it was objected to him, by a rival soldier, that, being a Christian, he could not perform the usual sacrifice to the emperors. The judge before whom this objection was raised interrogated him respecting the charge, and gave him three hours during which he might consider whether he would renounce his Christianity or be promoted in the ranks. During this interval he was met by his bishop, who, taking him to the church, and pointing to his sword on the one hand and the book of the gospels on the other, told him to choose which he would prefer. The soldier immediately took the book, and the bishop exhorted him to hold fast his Christianity, whatever might befall. The result was, that when the Christian soldier appeared before the magistrate, he nobly confessed the truth, and was beheaded for its sake. At this time, Dionysius of Alexandria, who had now returned to his place, was the most distinguished upholder of gospel truth, contending manfully for it against the Sabellians and Novatians. But Alexandria was now suffering the miseries of a civil war, which raged so fiercely that the bishop in one of his letters says that "to travel from the East to the West was more easy than to go from one part of Alexandria to another." Pestilence added its horrors at this time to the outrages of war; and Dionysius says, "Many of our brethren, through their great love and brotherly affection, spared not themselves, but clave one to another, and attended on the sick most diligently. . . . They took up the bodies of the saints with their open hands and on their bosoms, cleaned their eyes and closed their

mouths, carried them on their shoulders and composed their limbs, embraced, clung to them, and prepared them directly, washing and wrapping them up, and ere long they themselves shared in receiving the same offices." On this occasion, as on many others of a similar kind, the exertions of the Christians contrasted most favorably with the neglect and outrage which the dying and dead received from the heathen.*

Dionysius signalized himself by contending against an Egyptian bishop called Nepos, who had avowed Millenarian views. He also wrote in favor of the observance of the Passover, which he maintained should not be observed till after the vernal equinox. His numerous writings have not survived the desolations of time.

Much attention was about this juncture excited in the church by a bishop of Antioch, Paul of Samosata. His doctrine was, that Christ was not divine; that the Son had no separate personal existence; and that the logos (answering to reason in man) dwelt in Jesus, who was no otherwise different from other men than because he possessed a larger measure of intelligence than had belonged to any besides himself. It does no honor to the church at Antioch that they had elected this man to be their prelate, though it appears that this had been done of their own free choice. Patronized by Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, Paul exemplified characteristics by no means consistent with a Christian bishop. He was ambitious, secular, and arrogant. He loved state, and, as he allied to his episcopal dignity a civil office, to which large emoluments were attached, he became the possessor of extensive wealth. In his episcopal character he affected the utmost pomp and magnificence. When he appeared in public he was seated on a lofty tribunal, was attended by a multitude of servants, and delighted in the open plaudits by which, even in the church, his servile followers greeted the rounded periods of his rhetorical eloquence. Charges of licentiousness were

* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. vii.

brought against him, and he was accused of being not only himself immoral, but of encouraging his presbyters and deacons in the same practices. The influence of his unbounded popularity for some time prevented his deposition. But the detestation which his doctrine and life alike excited triumphed at length over the favoritism which upheld him, and he was deposed from his episcopal rank, to make room for a more worthy bishop. Yet till Zenobia, his patroness, was herself compelled to submit to the power of Aurelian, he was always sustained by that unfortunate queen. After that period he was neglected and forgotten. A party, known by the name of Paulinisti, continued for a little time to maintain his opinions; but they never became important. The degradation of this proud and boastful lover of himself excited no sympathy for his misfortunes, and his dangerous but superficial doctrines exerted little sway after the first moment of his popularity was passed.

Up to this time (A. D. 272), Aurelian, who had now ascended the imperial throne, had befriended Christianity. But he was about to become an enemy, like his predecessors, when death stopped his progress. At this time the declension of the church was manifest. The outward observances of religion were indeed maintained. Churches possessing some splendor of external decoration existed in the larger towns and cities; the Christians acquired wealth and achieved political distinction; but these things, so far from preventing, probably tended to hasten, the decay of interior and vital godliness. Things were fast tending to the state which justified the saying of a pious Christian of the age of Constantine, "Once we had wooden chalices and golden preachers: now we have golden chalices and wooden preachers." Ambition, jealousy, covetousness, ease, did their work; and piety, purity and zeal, diminished in proportion. Though there is no reason to suppose that the emperor was at any time prepossessed in favor of Christianity, he yet reposed for some time considerable trust in those who were its professors. But the influence of Galerius (Diocletian's son-in-law) was ex-

erted powerfully against the Christian cause; and the pagan priests, who beheld their craft continually and increasingly endangered by the progress of the Christian doctrine, threw their whole weight into the scale, which now preponderated against any longer toleration of the followers of the Nazarene. In A. D. 303 Aurelian published his first edict against Christianity. It was speedily followed by others of greater stringency.

But, before these edicts were actually issued, some occurrences had sufficiently marked the tendencies of the ruling powers. In Numidia a youth named Maximilianus had declined to serve as a soldier, on the plea that he was a Christian, and had refused to receive the badge of military enlistment. The proconsul threatened that he would send him "to his Christ." The young man replied that such an honor was what he most coveted. When the ensign was urged upon him for his acceptance, the youth declared it was impossible for him to take it. He was therefore sentenced to death upon the plea that he had traitorously refused military service.

Nor was this the only instance of the kind. On a great public occasion, an order was issued that all the soldiers should observe certain sacrificial ceremonials. Some, for refusing, were sentenced to death. Among the rest, one, named Marcellus, arose from the public banquet, and, throwing down his military insignia, declared that from that moment he renounced the service. He also suffered the extreme penalty.

At this time the most distinguished minister of the church was Theodorus, afterwards called Gregory, Bishop of Neocæsarea, in Cappadocia. The traditions of the church assign to him the performance of miracles to such an extent as to have imparted to him the name of wonder-worker, or Thaumaturgus. This servant of God was born of a noble family, and was educated in the Pagan religion; but about the age of fourteen, having then lost his father by death, he began to open his eyes to the absurdity, impurity and iniquity, of heathenism. In the

studies in which he was engaged (he was receiving an education as a Cappadocian barrister), he gave promise of being a first-class orator. As the sister of Gregory was about to accompany her husband to Palestine, of which place he was assessor, Gregory and his brother were invited to accompany them. This movement was connected with important results to their future life.

At Cæsarea the young men met Origen, whom the persecutions of Demetrius had driven from Alexandria, and who had now a temporary school in Palestine. Charmed with his addresses, and won by the reputation of so great a man, they resolved to hear him. Nor was this the impulse of the moment only; for Origen addressed them so gently and wisely, describing always under the name of true philosophy the excellences and virtues of the Christian religion, that they were caught before they were aware, and at length led to embrace and avow the principles of gospel truth. They remained with Origen till the persecutions of Maximian drove them from the East.

From Palestine, Gregory went to Alexandria, where the purity of his life shamed the other students with whom he was associated, and provoked them to excite calumnies against him, as short-lived, however, as they were untrue. He remained at Alexandria till Origen was able to resume his school at Cæsarea, where he again joined him, and was perhaps one of those whom Origen baptized. At length the brothers took leave of their beloved and venerable instructor. Origen's interest in them did not cease with their removal from his presence; he wrote to them, especially to Gregory, earnestly advising him to yield to God the learning and talents with which he was endowed, as the Jews consecrated the spoils of the Egyptians to the erection of the tabernacle in the wilderness. Instead, therefore, of taking the place of honor and renown which his friends expected, Gregory renounced all; and, the better to fit himself for his studies, and in accordance with the ascetic spirit which now exerted its influence on the church, he retired from the world into solitude,

that he might deepen and strengthen his piety, zeal, and fortitude. At the same time he resisted every endeavor to draw him from his retirement into the scenes and duties of a more active life. But at length, being greatly pressed, he consented to become Bishop of Neocæsarea, on condition of his being allowed a suitable time for preparatory exercises. The manner of his appointment was somewhat singular. The Bishop of Amasia had for some time desired to ordain him to the presidency of the church of Neocæsarea; but, aware of his intentions, Gregory eluded his search. At length the bishop took the bold step of instituting and ordaining Gregory, though absent and unconscious of the transaction. When this was done Gregory undertook the office, which he filled with singular energy and efficiency. On his first appointment there were only seventeen Christians in Neocæsarea, though the city was large, and the number of its inhabitants very great. But at the end of his ministry his belief was, that, notwithstanding all the oppressions and outrages to which, under the Decian persecution, his flock had been exposed, there were only seventeen persons in the city who were not Christians. But it must be observed with regard to these statements, as well as to some that follow, that almost every relation seems to have been sharpened or pointed to accord with the wonder-working character of this saint. Some specimens of his miracles may now be given. We must only request the reader to observe that they stand recorded on the authority of Gregory of Nyssen, who lived nearly a hundred years after his namesake. It is easy to conceive how, in the course of that time, and with all the predispositions of the church to believe in the extraordinary without, rather than in the spiritual within, similar miracles should have been little sifted as to their evidence, and grossly exaggerated in their detail. If the appetite of the public for such marvels were in the nineteenth century as eager as the inclination of the Romish Church to manufacture them is strong, we might still have a series of wonders which, fifty years hence, might pass for miracles of the first order.

We relate the following, and leave the reader to estimate them at their true value:

Once, as Gregory was going out of the city to regain his beloved wilderness, a violent storm compelled him to take refuge in a heathen temple, then held in high repute for its divinations and oracles. On entering within its enclosure, the saint made the sign of the cross several times in the air, which was the usual formula for the driving away of evil spirits. Afterwards he spent the night within the shrine. When he had departed, and the priest came as usual to consult his gods, he received for answer that it was impossible for them any longer to stay in the temple, after the exorcism performed by the stranger on the previous night. The priest incanted with all his power, but in vain; and at length he went to seek Gregory, and to threaten him with all the severities of the civil power if he did not bring the gods back again to their fane. The saint told him, with the utmost nonchalance, that he could drive away or could summon all demons at his pleasure. When the pagan asked for a proof of this, Gregory sent him back to his temple with a small piece of paper, on which he had written "Satan, reënter!" When this was laid upon the altar, the responses of the oracle were as distinct as before. Amazed and confounded, the priest went back to Gregory, and begged for instruction in the principles of so divine a religion. This Gregory cheerfully granted, and the heathen priest listened with admiration to the instructions of the saint. But when Thaumaturgus expounded the doctrine of the incarnation, all the incredulity of his heathen disciple was aroused, and he declared that such a statement it was impossible for him to believe. The manner in which Gregory convinced his understanding was short and summary. He challenged the priest to point to one of the numerous stones about them, and to declare the place to which he would have it removed. The heathen did so, and the stone was instantly transported to the spot. Whereupon the priest renounced his profession, and gave himself up to the

teachings of so powerful a master. — The church in which Gregory preached was so sacred that, whilst neighboring structures were demolished in the persecutions of Diocletian, and scarcely any edifice in its vicinity escaped the ravages of a destructive earthquake, not a stone of it was touched. A river which passed under the walls of Neocæsarea often overflowed its banks, and caused extensive desolations. Gregory, fixing his staff near the bank, prayed that the waters might never be permitted to pass it more. The staff became a large tree ; by the time of Gregory of Nyssen the waters had never reached it. — Two clever but unprincipled Jews endeavored to extort money from Thaumaturgus by false pretences. One of them feigned to be dead, and the other begged money for his burial. The bishop took his coat and cast it over the prostrate man ; when the other, rejoicing over the success of his fraud, lifted the covering from his companion, he found him dead ! — The possession of a lake was a point in dispute between two brothers, who were about to have recourse to arms, if, perchance, they might settle their dispute. To prevent bloodshed, Gregory spent a night in prayer, and, at his intercession, the lake became dry land. — A neighboring city wanted a bishop, and Gregory was invited to assist at his election. The inclination of the church was to choose, that he might fill this office, some person possessed of riches and worldly influence ; but Gregory told them that so important a trust demanded much higher qualifications than these, and advised them to elect as their bishop Alexander, a collier in their neighborhood. This man was brought before the church, and Gregory, putting many questions to him, received such answers as eminently displayed his wisdom and sanctity. He then inquired of the collier who he was, and he was obliged to confess that, instigated by the fear of God, he had left his station and his books, and had adopted the self-mortification of working for his bread. It may be observed, with respect to the latter story, that though it is related as an illustration of

Gregory's miraculous discernment, it might easily have happened without any supernatural intervention.

Among the remnants of Gregory Thaumaturgus which have come down to us, one of the most remarkable is a creed said to have been delivered to him at the beginning of his ministry by St. John the Evangelist and the Blessed Virgin, who appeared to him in a vision. Upon their departure, he committed to writing the words they had revealed. It is thus rendered by Dr. Waterland, who cites it as illustrative of the Ante-Nicene belief in the Trinity, avowing, however, his suspicion that the words in brackets are a marginal gloss which has become incorrectly incorporated with the text.

"There is one God, Father of the Living Word, the substantial Wisdom and Power and Eternal Express Image; Perfect Parent of one Perfect, Father of the Only Begotten Son. There is one Lord, One of One, God of God, the express Character and Image of the Godhead, the Effective Word, the Wisdom that grasps the system of the Universe, and the Power that made every creature, True Son of the True Father, Invisible of Invisible, Incorruptible of Incorruptible, Immortal of Immortal, and Eternal of Eternal. And there is one Holy Ghost, having his subsistence from God, and shining forth by the Son [to mankind], Perfect Image of the Perfect Son, Life causal of all living, the Holy Fountain, Essential Sanctity, Author of all sanctification, in whom God the Father is manifested, who is above all and in all; and God the Son, who is through all. A perfect Trinity, undivided, unseparated in glory, eternity, and dominion. There is, therefore, nothing created or servile in this Trinity, nothing adventitious that once was not and came in after; for the Father was never without the Son, nor the Son without the Spirit; but this Trinity abides the same, unchangeable and invariable forever."

Besides other productions, Gregory wrote a canonical epistle, having reference to the time which followed the Gothic invasion of Asia under Gallienus, and intended to afford directions amidst

the disorders and perplexities consequent upon such a desolation. It is mainly devoted to directions for administering penance. It declares, for instance, that captives, whether men or women, were not to be regarded as responsible for deeds which they had been forcibly compelled to perform; that those who had laid hands on the property of captives during their absence should be compelled to make restitution; that those who had detained as captives men already liberated from the barbarians were worthy of execration; that if any had united with the barbarians in outraging or murdering the Christians, they should not even be permitted to hear the gospel; that if any had broken open a house, he should undergo the same punishment unless he made a voluntary confession, &c. &c. At the same time, four degrees of penance are distinguished. The first was performed by standing at the doors of the church, and entreating, with tears and lamentations, the prayers of those who entered in to worship. The second admitted into the church, but compelled the penitent to be placed among the catechumens. The third admitted him to the body of the church, but commanded him to retire when the catechumens did. The last, which is probably an addition subsequent to the times of Gregory, admitted to the church, to the body of believers, and to the sacraments, but enjoined a standing posture.*

Gregory Thaumaturgus was one of the bishops constituting the Council of Antioch, A. D. 265, by which Paul of Samosata was deposed. This seems to have been the last public act of his life. Neocæsarea, the place of his residence, became afterwards the seat of an archbishopric.

The description given by Basil of Gregory Thaumaturgus is very enthusiastic. He speaks of him as a man of a most apostolical temper, distinguished for his piety and devoutness. He tells us that he always prayed with his head bare; that he never called his brother fool; that he never exceeded yea and

* Dupin's Eccl. Hist.

nay; and that he hated all that was untrue, proud, wrathful and slandering.

Gregory Thaumaturgus is, however, one of those bishops who have been not unjustly charged with adding not a little to the ceremonials of religion, under the impression that by such means the heathen would more readily allow themselves to be guided by Christianity. In illustration of this, Mosheim quotes a passage from his life, as follows:

"When Gregory perceived that the ignorant multitude persisted in their idolatry on account of the pleasures and sensual gratifications which they enjoyed at the pagan festivals, he granted them a permission to indulge themselves in the like pleasures in celebrating the memory of the holy martyrs, hoping that, in process of time, they would return, of their own accord, to a more virtuous and regular course of life."

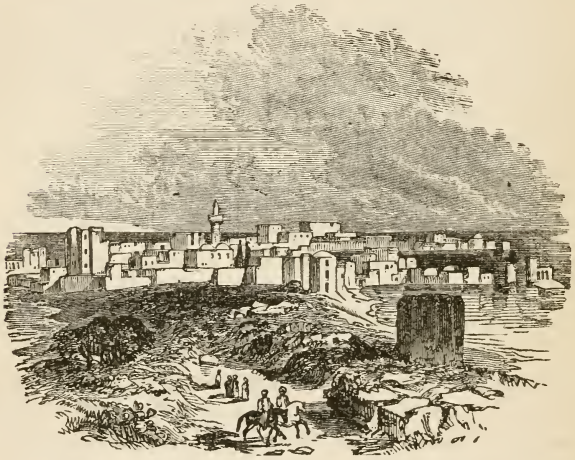
On which Mosheim remarks:

"There is no sort of doubt that, by this permission, Gregory allowed the Christians to dance, sport, and feast at the tombs of the martyrs upon their respective festivals, and to do everything which the Pagans were accustomed to do in their temples during the feasts celebrated in honor of their gods."*

Such appliances as these, too faithfully copied in subsequent ages of the church, have been fraught with disaster and ruin to the cause of personal and spiritual religion. By such conformities the world has sacrificed nothing, whilst the church has lost everything. Instead of being won by such concessions, they have often provoked the heathen remark, repeated in different forms even in our own times, when the practices of the Church of Rome have been in question, — that it was difficult to discern the distinction between the Christianity so exhibited and heathenism itself, except that the names were different and the ritual costume a little varied. The next age will supply to the observer abundant illustrations of the fearful extent to which such accommodations were carried.

* Mosheim, Eccl. Hist., ch. iv.

Among other cities in which about this time the profession of the Christian religion appears to have been largely made, we must not omit to mention the celebrated Tyre. This renowned "empress of the seas," as it was termed, after its destruction by Alexander the Great, was partially restored, though its rival, Alexandria, prevented it from regaining any considerable importance.



TYRE.

Beyond the fact of its having become a station of Christians, we know little of its history during this century, though its name is frequently mentioned at a subsequent period by ecclesiastical historians.

In the year 284, Diocletian, then somewhat advanced in life, sat upon the throne of the Cæsars. He was a man whose wickedness was the offspring and result of his weakness, and was by birth the son of a scrivener or of a slave. At this time, as, indeed, its credulity proves, the church was in a state

of great spiritual declension. A repose of nearly fifty years had added little to the vigor and zeal of the Christians.

Diocletian's persecution commenced with the most decisive vigor. The Terminalia, a great pagan festival, was chosen as the time of its initiation. Churches were entered; copies of the gospel seized; the meetings of Christians forbidden; the holding of high offices prohibited to those who were followers of Jesus; and even slaves declared unfit for freedom, so long as they bore the name of Him who had died upon the cross for the sins of men. Everything, in short was done which could be done to realize the legend of a coin which was already struck, bearing the inscription, "The name of Christianity being abolished." The effort was to annihilate Christianity by one simultaneous blow. One circumstance peculiarly marked this persecution — the attempt to destroy the Christian religion by exterminating all the sacred writings. But many of the magistrates did not concur cheerfully in the efforts of the ruling powers. A singular expedient was adopted at this time by Mensurius, Bishop of Carthage. He removed all the precious manuscripts from his church, and left in their stead a collection of the writings of heretics, which were seized. Annulinus, the proconsul, was informed of this device, but declined to make search in the house of the bishop for the true writings. It appears that this was not the only occasion on which the officers of justice were deceived by the substitution of false writings for the true. Those who gave up their sacred manuscripts, in order to make peace with the heathen magistrates, were branded with the name of *Traditores*, and excommunicated from the church. But many, especially in Africa, solicited martyrdom in a manner which did not always reflect the highest credit on the purity of their motives. Implicated in criminal transactions, or ambitious of being objects of veneration, some are recorded to have sought a death which, in the days of the church's best prosperity, had been received with far different motives. Mensurius, therefore, refused to many of these the honor of being

placed amongst the ranks of Christian martyrs. One or two narratives of a better order are worthy of being presented to the reader.

A band of Christians were seized in Numidia, whilst assembled for purposes of worship, and were brought down to Carthage, singing hymns on their way. The torture was applied to extort confessions from them. One in his pangs cried out, "Ye do wrong, unhappy men! ye lacerate the innocent * * * I thank thee, O Lord. Give me strength to suffer in Thy name. * * * It appears, — the eternal, the incorruptible kingdom! O, Lord Christ! we are Christians; we are Thy servants. Thou art our hope." When reminded that he ought to have obeyed the law of the emperor, he cried out, in the severity of his tortures, "I reverence no other law but that which I have learned of God — for this law I am ready to die. There is no other law." A second, when asked under the question, "Have you any sacred writings in your house?" replied, "I have sacred writings, but they are in my heart." A brother of a third of the victims, whose name was Victoria, and who was a Christian maiden, endeavored to save his sister by declaring that she was not in her right mind. She persisted, however, in maintaining that she knew her own mind well, and that she was resolved to suffer with the Christians. Amongst the rest was a little boy, named Hilarinus, who cried out to his persecutors, with a heroic courage worthy of riper years, "Do what you please; I am a Christian."

Among the martyrs who signalized on this occasion their Christian faith and fortitude, Eusebius makes mention of one whom he selects as a specimen of the rest. We shall give the account in his own words. It relates to a Christian named Peter.

"Being therefore commanded to sacrifice, as he refused, it was ordered that naked he should be lifted on high and scourged with rods over his whole body, until he should be reduced to subjection, and willing to do what was commanded. As he was

unchanged by these sufferings, though his bones were already laid bare, vinegar was mixed with salt, and poured upon the mangled parts of his body. When these torments were borne, they put a gridiron and fire into the midst of the people, and the flesh of his body was placed in the fire, like meat for cooking and eating — not all at once, lest he should expire soon, but little by little, and his tormentors were forbidden to cease, lest, after such sufferings, he should expire before they had finished their task. But he, with closed teeth, maintaining his purpose, yielded his life, victorious over all their tortures."*

A fire which had broken out in the emperor's palace at Nicomedia, attributed by some to Galerius, but most probably the effect of lightning, afforded a new pretext for increasing the severity of this persecution. Burning, the axe, the water, were vigorously employed against the Christians. In Palestine, where some intestine commotions had broken forth, Christians were subjected to great outrages.

This severe persecution reached Britain, then under the government of Constantius Chlorus; and though it derived from him no new severity, was bitterly felt in these remote islands, especially in some of the south-midland districts. Among those who suffered at this time was Alban, the proto-martyr of Britain, who has given his name to a celebrated town in Hertfordshire, then called Verulam, of which he was a distinguished citizen; Amphibalus, who lived in the vicinity; and Aaron and Julius, in Monmouthshire. A short notice of Alban may be interesting to the reader.

Alban was born of pagan parents. In his youth he went to Rome (to visit which was, in pagan times, as now, a part of a polite education), accompanied by Amphibalus, a devotee of Cærleon, who, by his conversation, had been the means of converting Alban from the errors of paganism. When the persecution commenced, Amphibalus sought refuge in the house of

* Euseb. l. viii. 6.

Alban, who was not yet known to be a Christian. A party of soldiers was sent to apprehend the guest, and to bring him before the prætor. Alban, having learned their intentions, clothed himself in the garments of Amphibalus, and presented himself in the place of his friend. When he arrived before the tribunal, the magistrate, who was at the moment engaged in sacrificing to the gods, recognized Alban, and said, "Because thou hast chosen to conceal a sacrilegious person and a blasphemer rather than deliver him up to the just reward of his blasphemy, the punishment due to him shall be inflicted on thee, if thou refusest to comply with the ceremonies of our religion." Alban boldly declared that he would not obey the commands of the judge. The prætor inquired what was his family. "To what purpose," said Alban, "do you ask respecting my family? If you would know my religion, I am a Christian!" The magistrate then asked his name. "My name," said he, "is Alban, and I worship the only living and true God, who created all things." "If," said the prætor, "you would enjoy the happiness of eternal life, delay not to sacrifice to the great gods." "The sacrifices you offer," said Alban, "are made to devils; they cannot help the needy, or grant the petitions of their suppliants." The judge, now beyond measure enraged, commanded the holy confessor to be beaten, hoping by this severity to shake his constancy; but, finding all his endeavors ineffectual, he ordered him to be led to immediate execution.

The narrations of the death of Alban are given by Gildas and Bede with every garnish of miraculous accompaniment. The tale, as told by them, is the following. The reader will have no difficulty in dismissing, as altogether fabulous, such hearsay narrations.

When Alban was sentenced, so large a multitude (says the legend) attended him to his place of execution, that the judge was left almost alone. Before the place of beheading could be reached, it was necessary to cross the river, which was very rapid, by a bridge so narrow as that the large multitude would

have required almost a day to traverse it; and, as to wait for them would delay for so long a season the crown he longed for, Alban offered a short prayer, at which the stream was divided, permitting the confessor and his spectators to pass over without danger. This miracle converted the executioner himself, and caused him to refuse to do his bloody work. A delay accordingly occurred; for it was necessary to seek for a new executioner. Alban ascended a hill near the tower, but, as he was overcome with thirst, a fountain rose up at his prayer, for his solace. After some delay, a new executioner was found, who struck off St. Alban's head. But the severed head and the executioner's eyes fell to the ground at the same time. Most of the spectators were converted by this judgment; and the greater part of them were slain for their faith. The judge was so much impressed by the courage and constancy of the martyr of Verulam, that he gave orders for the cessation of the persecution.

The history of St. Alban, rejecting its miraculous accompaniments, is perhaps the most ancient record, on which any reliance can be placed, of the progress of Christianity in these islands.

This persecution of Diocletian appears to have found much material in Britain. The following are the remarks of Gildas, who, with Bede, and other writers of the dark ages was sufficiently credulous as to miraculous interpositions:

"Though Christ's precepts were received at first lukewarmly by the inhabitants, yet they remained entirely with some, and less sincerely with others, until the nine years' persecution of the tyrant Diocletian, in which the churches were overturned throughout the whole world, and all the sacred Scriptures that could be found were burned in the streets, and the chosen shepherds of God's flock butchered with their innocent sheep, so that (as far as could possibly be) in some provinces no vestige appeared of the Christian religion. Then how many spectacles there were; how many human massacres; how many various punishments of death; how many ruins of apostolical faith; how many crowns of glorious martyrdom! The mercy of God was

then magnified toward us, willing that all men should be saved, and calling, not only sinners, but those who thought themselves just, to repentance. Those who remained hid themselves in deserts and caves of the woods, expecting that safety from God which they could not obtain from their severe butchers." We learn also from Bede that at this time "many of both sexes in different places underwent the most cruel and unheard-of tortures, being lacerated in all their members, and dismissed, with joyful spirits, to the regions above."

The narratives of this persecution abound with incidents of the most agonizing cruelties, mixed, however, with marvels which, originating at a time when pious frauds were avowedly resorted to, must be received with great caution. Such are the stories related by Eusebius, of wild animals who instantly destroyed other victims, but who were held back by a divine interposition from advancing upon those Christians who held themselves in the form of the cross, though the beasts were goaded with red-hot irons, and showed their impatience by tearing the earth with their feet. Many barbarities were practised in Tyre. The flesh was torn from their bones; they were tortured by the rack; underwent the most cruel scourgings; were burned; were drowned in the sea; were exhausted by famine, or crucified, in some cases with their heads downward.

The Thebaid of Egypt was remarkable for the violent outrages there committed. Naked bodies were tied to trees till death released them from their sufferings; or were torn in pieces by ropes, each affixed to trees forcibly bent towards each other, then being suddenly permitted to relapse into their original position. These and similar tortures continued during several years.

"At one time," says Eusebius, "ten or more, at another more than twenty, at another time not less than thirty, and even sixty; and again, at another time, a hundred men, with their wives and little children, were slain in one day, whilst they were condemned to many and various punishments. We our-

selves have observed, when on the spot, many crowded together in one day, some suffering decapitation, some the torments of flames; so that the murderous weapon was completely blunted, and, having lost its edge, broke in pieces; and the executioners themselves, wearied with slaughter, were obliged to relieve each other."* The historian relates, with the authority of a personal witness, the constancy and unflinching courage with which many of these martyrs bore their sufferings.

CONSTANTINE THE GREAT.

Alexandria, Phrygia, Arabia, Cappadocia and Antioch, furnished also their contingents to this fearful history. Eusebius mentions the case of a matron and her daughters at the last place, who, to avoid the injury to which they were exposed,

* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. c. ix.

threw themselves into the river. Nor does he add to this recital any note of reprobation. Pontus witnessed some refinements of torture. Sharp reeds thrust under the nails, boiling lead poured down the back, eyes torn out of the head, and their vacancies cauterized with burning irons, are among the devices related by Eusebius as having occurred in this place.

The last burst of this tremendous storm occurred in the year 304. The inhabitants were summoned into the temples by public proclamation; their names being read from prepared lists, and those who were ascertained to be Christians were immediately apprehended. Amidst the violence of this outbreak Diocletian died, and Constantius Chlorus and Galerius divided between them the Roman empire. A new train of events was, by the providence of God, in progress, and the severity of the recent persecution exercised no unimportant influence on the events which followed. By what means these desolating ravages, which had so peculiarly affected the East, were stayed; how the church, so long trodden down beneath the feet of power, became suddenly elevated and distinguished; and how its external grandeur added nothing to the purity, the vitality, or the zeal, of that body which had once been properly called the church of God, will be already known to every reader who is familiar with the annals of Constantine the Great.

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The course of history through which the reader has been now conducted may justify a few concluding observations.

No considerate mind can look without wonder and adoration at the progress of a system such as Christianity, which, rising as it did in the midst of the civilized nations of the world, when opinions were mature, when criticism was acute, when learning was profound, and when there existed no possibility that its first advance could be hidden in obscurity, achieved, in the face of opposition the most deadly, and of dangers the most imminent, such extraordinary and extensive success. Borrowing nothing

from heathenism, which it uncompromisingly opposed; and exciting in the strongest form the enmity of Judaism, by declaring the continuance of its system unnecessary and injurious; boasting of no name except one which the Greek and the Jew alike pronounced to be either ridiculous or disgraceful; and pursued from its commencement by a storm so furious as to be unparalleled in the history of human progress: it yet rose till it awakened attention, till it made itself known and felt, and by the end of the fourth century had spread itself over considerable portions of Asia, Europe and Africa, — over a large area, in fact, of the then known world. Before it philosophy and science shrank away; prejudices and prepossessions, though of the most ancient date, disappeared; the imperial power of the most astonishing of the ancient empires became confounded; threats could not terrify it; ridicule could not render it contemptible; prisons could not confine it; chains could not bind it; fire could not burn it; death could not destroy it. It possessed a subtle influence which defied all the powers which till then the world had known. It rendered obsolete by degrees the things of which, till it appeared, mankind had been most proud; and, like a royal conqueror, dethroned the ancient superstitions, and seated itself in their place. All that belonged to its own system was invincible and indestructible. Like God's air, it could not be exhausted; like God's light, it could not be put out. Was not such a religion nobly divine? What else could adequately account for its influence? We may well adopt, without his sneer, the conclusion to which the historian of "the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" attributes so surprising a result. It was "owing to the convincing evidence of the doctrine itself, and to the ruling providence of its great Author."

It will be at the same time apparent to all who dwell, even cursorily, upon the pages of ecclesiastical history and biography, how large a mass of distinguished virtues are here exhibited for the admiration of the world. Granted, as it may well be, that

these were seldom without alloy, the amount of pure metal is nevertheless most extraordinary. Nothing affords a resemblance but Judaism; even *it* is not worthy to be regarded as a parallel. Heathenism looks dark and contemptible by the side of the recital. Such purity, such humility, such temperance, such patience, such a return of good for evil, such abandonment of selfish and inferior purposes, such contempt of suffering, such care for afflicted brethren, such large beneficence, such zeal to promote what was regarded as true, such victory over death, such energetic confidence in a world to come, as the primitive ages of Christianity set forth, have no earthly resemblance. In the days of their best manifestation, they dared heathenism to the comparison, and it shrank before the challenge.

Nor is it less manifest to what doctrines and influences such magnificent results were attributable. The earliest histories of the church are full of heretical tendencies; it was not among these that such high virtues were mainly conspicuous. They furnished few heroes, few martyrs. The illustrious and the holy were those who held the natural corruption of the human heart; its dependence, for renovation, on the sanctifying power of God's Holy Spirit; the atonement of the Lord Jesus as the source of all true justification, and the Divinity which gave value to the sufferer and to his work; those, in short, who held that God's grace made, and God's grace maintained, the inward power of the Christian life.

Equally apparent is it that, as these truths diminished and declined, the power of Christianity departed in corresponding proportion. When human philosophy interposed its mere intellectual wisdom; when the exploded Judaism returned with its mystic subtleties; when, instead of a devout and humble dependence on the Divine Spirit as the source of all, men turned to an external organization and mechanical appliances; and when, as if they had just found the secret of holding the earthly without renouncing the heavenly, religion began to grow into a human and sacerdotal system, — Christianity declined. In so

corrupted an atmosphere it could no longer breathe. We see it already sickening. Its death-knell was near!

It will not, we hope, be without its uses, to remind the reader that the commencement of this fatal change had taken place before the period of history with which our volume concludes. He who would have religion pure must drink from the fountain alone. The Christianity of the fourth, even of the third century, was already a corrupted stream. If the argument from antiquity have any value, it is when it aids us to appeal from the ancient church of Tertullian's or Cyprian's days to a still earlier period — to that of the disciples and apostles of the Lord themselves. We need not go to the post-Nicene church for rubrics and relics; for reverence to martyrs, and the *opus operatum* of sacerdotal assumptions. Before that time the "fine gold had become dim." The corruption of the church is not alone due to the Papacy. "Perilous times" had dawned upon it before the Bishop of Rome claimed a universal spiritual authority over its affairs.

This last fact is of great importance, and it has not always received the attention it deserves. "Decipimur specie recti;" the appearance of truth often stands instead of its reality. It is no favorable leaning towards the Church of Rome which prompts the remark that it has had much attributed to it which it deserves only because it has adopted and sanctioned it. We yawn, and laugh, and grieve by turns, at the marvels to which Romanism gives currency; yet most of the miraculous stories which stimulate the wonder without deepening the devotion of Roman Catholics, have a much earlier origin than the Papacy. We scorn the hooded and ignorant "trumpery" of modern "monks, eremites and friars;" yet, before the close of the third century, asceticism had become in vogue to the destruction of virtue; and it was not long after this volume closes that monkery set up in the person of Symeon Stylites the triumphal statue of its living man openly commemorating a dead Christianity. We abjure, as the parent of more evils than can be named, or even thought of, the doctrine of the celibate; yet long before

the Papacy priests began to abjure their wives, and the celibacy of the clergy was regarded as most important, though not yet enforced by positive law. In the ante-Nicene period sin was regarded much more in its overt demonstrations than in its spiritual destructiveness; repentance had degenerated into penance; regeneration into baptism; justification by faith into — just what the ninetieth number of "The Tracts for the Times" declares it to be; and sanctification was lost in the names of sacred persons, sacred things, and sacred places. All this was before the Papacy had begun to blazon its triple crown, or to set its feet upon the necks of kings.

The consequences of these doctrines and these practices became, before the fourth century of Christianity had begun, only too apparent. But, at the commencement of the fifth, a presbyter of Marseilles, named Salvian, himself separated from his wife, a contemporary of Jerome, Cyril, Vincent of Lerins, Augustine, Theodoret, Socrates and Sozomen, gives a picture of the state of the church not to be contemplated without horror. By that time the seeds which we have seen already sown had ripened into plants full of all poisonous and deadly influences.

"Who is there," he asks, with honest indignation, "who is not rolling in the mire of fornication? And what more? What I am about to state is grave and mournful. The very church of God, which ought in all things to please God, — what does it but provoke Him to anger? With the exception of a *very few*, who fly from vice, what is almost every Christian congregation, but a sink of vices? For you will find in the church scarcely one who is not either a drunkard, or a glutton, or an adulterer, or a fornicator, or a ravisher, or a robber, or a manslayer, and, what is worse than all, almost all these without limit. I put it now to the consciences of all Christian people, whether it be not so that you will barely find one who is not addicted to some of the vices and crimes I have mentioned; or rather who is it that is not guilty of all? Truly you will more easily find the man who is guilty of all than one who is guilty of none. As to this

none — my imputations, perhaps, may seem too serious; I will go further; — sooner will you find those chargeable with every crime than not chargeable with all; sooner those addicted to the greatest crimes than those guilty of the less. I mean to say that more are living in the perpetration of the greater as well as of the lighter vices than of the lighter alone. Into this shameless dissoluteness of manners is nearly the entire ecclesiastical mass so sunk that, throughout the Christian community, it has come to be regarded as a species of sanctity if one is a little less vicious than others." *

And is this the Christianity to which, with all the power of influence and fascinating ritual, we are invited to return? There are passages in the history of the modern evangelical church which are gloomy and distressing. But there is surely a deeper death beyond. Not for this will the true church be contented to let its religion go!

It is of the highest importance that those who would preserve the church should guard with the most vigilant care its doctrinal purity and its inward life.

Above all, let us remember that the true ecclesiastical doctrine is the reverse of that we have seen avowed by some of those who lived late in the period of which we have written. Instead of the dogma, — questionable because a nominal religion is often grossly deceptive, — "Ubi Ecclesia, ibi Spiritus" — "Where the church is, there is the Spirit," let us read the motto reversed, "Ubi Spiritus, ibi Ecclesia" — "Where the Spirit is, there is the church." And be it the concern of Christ's true disciples to contend for what Dr. Merle (D'Aubigné) calls the three ONLYS:

"The Word of God ONLY;
The Grace of Christ ONLY;
The Work of the Spirit ONLY!"

* Quoted in Taylor's Ancient Christianity, vol. ii. p. 41.

# CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

| EMPERORS. | SECULAR EVENTS. | ECCLESIASTICAL EVENTS. |
|---|---|---|
| TIBERIUS. | - - - | Pentecost.<br>Peter and John visit Samaria.<br>Conversion of Paul. |
| A. D. 37. | | |
| CALIGULA. | Philo's deputation from Alexandria . . . . . | Paul and Barnabas at Antioch. |
| A. D. 41. | | |
| CLAUDIUS. | Herod Agrippa restored.<br>Herod's death. Claudius visits Britain . . . . . | Famine at Jerusalem, A. D. 44. |
| | Cuspius Fadus Governor of Judæa . . . . . | Paul's first missionary journey. |
| | Caractacus prisoner at Rome . | Paul and Barnabas at Jerusalem, A. D. 52.<br>Paul's second missionary journey.<br>*First and Second Epistle to Thessalonians.* |
| A. D. 54. | | |
| NERO. | Britannicus poisoned . . . . | Paul's third missionary journey. |
| | Agrippina put to death . . .<br>Suetonius Paulinus defeats Britons . . . . . | *Epistle to Galatians. First Epistle to Corinthians — to Romans.* |
| | Boadicea defeats Romans . . . | Paul brought to Rome, A. D. 61.<br>*Epistle to Ephesians — Philippians — Colossians — Philemon. Close of Acts of the Apostles*, A. D. 63. |
| | | Paul liberated, A. D. 63? First Christian persecution. |
| | Conflagration at Rome . . . . | *First Epistle to Timothy. Epistle to Titus. Second Epistle to Timothy.* |
| | Vespasian commences Jewish war . . . . . | Peter and Paul executed, A. D. 66, 67. |
| A. D. 68. | | |
| GALBA. | | |
| A. D. 69. | | |
| OTHO.<br>VITELLIUS. | - - - | James beheaded, A. D. 69. |

| EMPERORS. | SECULAR EVENTS. | ECCLESIASTICAL EVENTS. |
|---|---|---|
| A. D. 70. | | |
| VESPASIAN. | Jerusalem destroyed, A. D. 70.<br>Great pestilence at Rome. | *Epistles of John.* |
| A. D. 79. | | |
| TITUS. | Herculaneum and Pompeii destroyed. | |
| A. D. 81. | | |
| DOMITIAN. | - - - | Christian persecution, A. D. 91.<br>Banishment of John, A. D. 95. |
| A. D. 96. | | |
| NERVA. | - - - | John writes *Apocalypse* and *Gospel.* |
| A. D. 98. | | |
| TRAJAN. | Trajan subdues the Dacians .<br>Pliny's letter to Trajan, A. D. 110 . . . . . .<br>Insurrection of Jews in Cyrene . . . . . | John dies.<br>Martyrdom of Ignatius, A. D. 116. |
| A. D. 117. | | |
| HADRIAN. | Hadrian's wall built.<br>Trajan visits Greece, A. D. 124.<br>Jerusalem rebuilt, A. D. 132. | Quadratus' *Apology.* |
| A. D. 138. | | |
| ANTONINES PIUS. | Wall of Antoninus in Britain. | Justin's first *Apology*, A. D. 148.<br>Polycarp visits Rome. Tertullian born. |
| A. D. 161. | | |
| M. AURELIUS. | War with Marcomanni . . . . | Polycarp's martyrdom, A. D. 167.<br>Justin's second *Apology*, and martyrdom.<br>Hermas ? Hegesippus.<br>Martyrdom of Pothinus — Tatian.<br>Persecution at Lyons and Vienne. |
| A. D. 180. | | |
| COMMODUS. | Saracens defeat Romans.<br>Marcia . . . . . | Callistus. Clemens of Alexandria died. |
| A. D. 193. | | |
| S. SEVERUS. | Byzantium besieged and taken . . . . . .<br>Severus visits Britain. | Fifth persecution of Christians.<br>Minucius Felix. |
| A. D. 211. | | |
| GETA. CARACALLA. | Geta murdered, A. D. 212. | Tertullian — Zephyrinus. |
| A. D. 217. | | |
| MACRINUS. | - - - | Origen flourished. |
| A. D. 218. | | |
| ELAGABALUS. | Mammæa. | |

| EMPERORS. | SECULAR EVENTS. | ECCLESIASTICAL EVENTS. |
|---|---|---|
| A. D. 222. | | |
| | Tribute paid by Rome to Goths. | |
| Alexander Severus. | - - - | Hippolytus Bishop of Portus. |
| A. D. 235. | | |
| | | Sixth persecution. |
| Maximin. | Dacians and Sarmatians defeated. | Origen dies, A. D. 254. |
| A. D. 238. | | |
| Gordian I.<br>Gordian II.<br>Pupienus.<br>Balbinus.<br>Gordian III. | Gordian II. defeats Persians. | |
| A. D. 244. | | |
| Philip the Arabian. | Secular games celebrated at Rome. | Christians in favor at court.<br>Cyprian elected bishop. |
| A. D. 249. | | |
| Decius. | - - - | Seventh persecution.<br>Cornelius. — Novatus.<br>Novatian. |
| A. D. 251. | | |
| Gallus. | Goths invade Mœsia. | |
| A. D. 254. | | |
| Æmilian.<br>Valerian. | - - | Stephen Bishop of Rome. |
| A. D. 260. | | |
| | | Eighth persecution. — Cyprian and Lawrence slain.<br>Christianity tolerated.<br>Dionysius of Alexandria. |
| Gallienus. | - - - | Paul of Samosata. |
| A. D. 268. | | |
| Claudius II. | Goths defeated by Claudius. | |
| A. D. 270. | | |
| Aurelian. | Zenobia defeated. | Ninth persecution.<br>Gregory Thaumaturgus. |
| A. D. 275. | | |
| Tacitus. | | |
| A. D. 276. | | |
| Probus. | | |

| EMPERORS. | SECULAR EVENTS. | ECCLESIASTICAL EVENTS. |
|---|---|---|
| A. D. 282. | | |
| Carus. | - - | Caius, Bishop of Rome. |
| A. D. 284. | | |
| Diocletian and Maximin. | Irruption of northern nations. | |
| | Partition of empire, A. D. 292, between Galerius and Constantius . . . . . Alexandria taken by Diocletian . . . . . | Tenth persecution. |
| A. D. 304. | | |
| Galerius and Constantius. | - - | Porphyry |
| A. D. 306. | Constantine the Great. | |

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I regard it as the most important auxiliary to the study of the Scriptures, among the great mass of people, of which I have any knowledge. Every Sabbath-school teacher, and indeed every Christian, who is able to do so, ought to possess himself of the work; and the fact that such a work is in existence, may well be regarded as one of the favorable signs of the times in regard to the progress of evangelical knowledge.

*From Rev. J. B. Waterbury, D. D., Pastor of Bowdoin St. (Congregational) Church, Boston*

It is a most valuable book, suited to the wants of clergymen, and well adapted to aid Sabbath-school teachers in their responsible work. Every family that can afford it, would do well to possess themselves of so important and interesting a volume; to which they might refer in elucidating the Scriptures, and rendering their study not only profitable but delightful.

*From Rev. E. N. Kirk, Pastor of Mount Vernon Congregational Church, Boston*

The work is invaluable to the student of the Bible. We have no other in this department to be compared with it, for condensing the results of modern researches or Oriental antiquities and topography, which are so valuable in explaining the language of the Bible.

*From Hon. Thomas S. Williams, Hartford, Ct.*

A mass of information, in a condensed form, highly important to those who regard the sacred volume; and to Sabbath-school teachers it will prove a most valuable assistant.

*From Hon. Edward Everett, LL. D., Boston.*

I have kept it on my table, and have frequently referred to it; and it has been a good deal read by different members of my family. I unite with them in the opinion that it is a valuable work, well adapted for the above-named purpose. It appears to embody, in a popular form, the results of much research, and will promote, I doubt not, the intelligent reading of the Scriptures.

*From Hon. George N. Briggs, LL. D., Pittsfield, Mass.*

To all who read and study the Bible it will be found to be a work of surpassing interest and utility. In families and in the hands of Sabbath-school teachers, its value and importance can hardly be over-estimated. Its explanations of the habits, customs, and religious rites of the Hebrews and the surrounding nations, are clear and important; and the light which it throws upon the biography, geography, and history of the Old and New Testament develops in those inspired volumes new beauties, and inspires a higher admiration for that Book of books, and a profounder reverence for its Divine Author. I wish there was a copy of it in every family in the land.

*From Jared Sparks, LL. D., President of Harvard College.*

I am glad to possess the work; and I enclose three dollars, which I understand to be the price of it.

*From Hon. Theodore Frelinghuysen, LL. D., New Brunswick, N. J.*

I regard it as a very valuable help to the student of the Bible. It brings to the aid of the reading community, in an instructive and condensed form, a rich treasure of historical and biblical literature, prepared and arranged by some of the best minds, and which could otherwise be gained only by a laborious and patient research, that very few have the leisure to give to the subject. No family would, I think, ever regret the purchase of a book so deserving of a household place.

*From Hon. John McLean, LL. D., of Ohio.*

It is only necessary to look through this volume to appreciate its value. There is no work I have seen which contains so much biblical knowledge, alphabetically arranged under appropriate heads, in so condensed a form, and which is sold so cheap. Under a leading word is to be found in this book, whether it relate to natural science or scriptural illustration, enough to satisfy every inquirer. Next to the Bible, this dictionary of it contains more interesting knowledge than any work of the same size, and it should be found in every family, in our public schools as well as in all our academies and colleges.

*From Hon. Simon Greenleaf, LL. D.*

A book that will prove highly useful to all persons engaged in the study of the Bible, or in teaching its sacred truths to the young. I hope, therefore, that it will be widely circulated.

*From Hon. Robert C. Winthrop, LL. D., Boston.*

I have examined with great pleasure your edition of Kitto's Popular Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature. It seems to me a most convenient and valuable aid to the study of the Scriptures, and I am glad that you have been able to publish it at so reasonable a price. It can hardly fail to commend itself to those who would teach, and to those who would learn, something more than the mere letter of the inspired volume.

*From Henry J. Ripley, D. D., Author of "Notes on the Scriptures," and Professor in Newton Theological Institution.*

It would be invaluable to Sabbath-school teachers, and of great utility to preachers. It every where shows evidence of research, and is particular and accurate in its details. It employs appropriate authorities, both less and more modern, as to questions of sacred criticism, of history and geography, and gives the reader the results of recent learned investigations. If the purpose of this book is gained, scriptural *knowledge will be increased*